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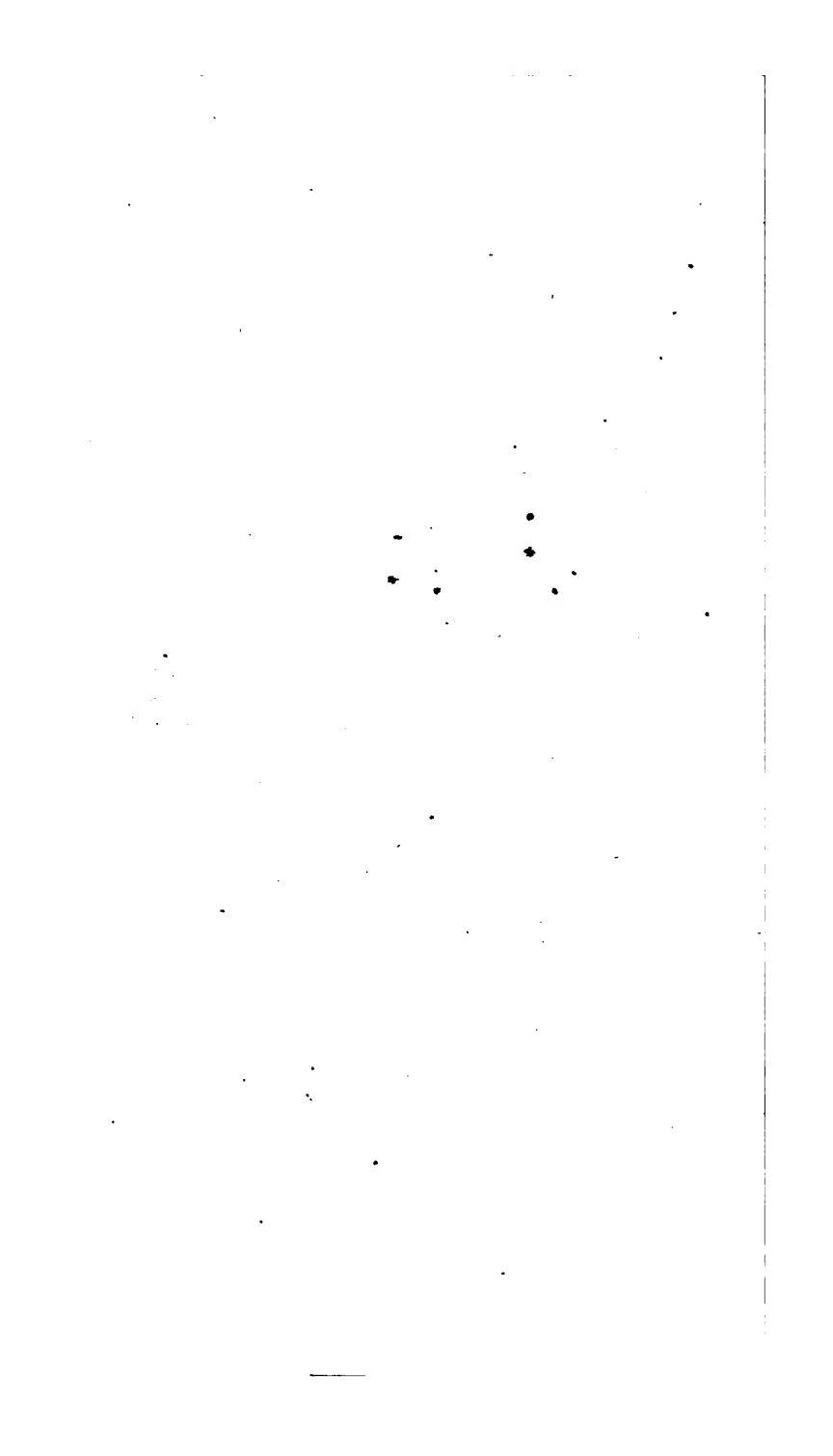
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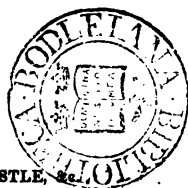


THE
APOSTLESHIP AND PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST:
BEING A
PRACTICAL EXPOSITION
OF ST. PAUL'S
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:

IN A
SERIES OF LECTURES.

WITH AN
APPENDIX,

CONTAINING A TABULAR ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE, &c.



BY THE

REV. THOMAS PARRY, M.A.

ARCHDEACON OF ANTIGUA,

IN THE DIOCESE OF BARBADOS AND THE LEEWARD ISLANDS:

AND LATE FELLOW OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

" Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God !" — Isa. xl. 9.
" Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith,
and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

Acts xiv. 22.

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TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND
WILLIAM HART COLERIDGE, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF BARBADOS AND THE LEEWARD ISLANDS,
AND
VISITOR OF CODRINGTON COLLEGE, BARBADOS.

MY LORD,

ON a former occasion, I took the liberty, though not expressly permitted, of soliciting the countenance of my *Diocesan* to a volume of "Sermons:" on the present, I venture to avail myself of your Lordship's permission to inscribe to the *Visitor of Codrington College* a work, by means of which I should rejoice to become serviceable to the interesting class of students—future ministers of the Gospel in these Colonies—for whose instruction that valuable Institution was more immediately intended. That my work may prove not altogether unworthy of your countenance, is my humble hope, whilst it is my fervent prayer, that, under the blessing of the Spirit of Truth, it may be rendered available to a sound, practical acquaint-

ance with Holy Scripture. Such an end is, I know, one chief object of your Lordship's solicitude in an episcopal charge of no ordinary difficulty and labour. That your valuable exertions, my Lord, may long be continued to the Church, is the earnest desire of many who have witnessed the effects with which Divine Providence has been pleased to bless them, and of none more than of

Your Lordship's

Ever obliged, obedient, and faithful servant,

THOMAS PARRY.

P R E F A C E.

THE object of the following pages, as stated in the writer's "Preface" to a similar work on the "Epistle to the Romans," is "to furnish an *Exposition* in a form interesting to *readers in general*; and such as may assist them, more especially in attaining to clear and *comprehensive* views of the main tenor of the Epistle, and of the connexion of its different parts, as also in practically applying its contents." Of the existence of any such work on the *Epistle to the Hebrews* the writer is not aware. Doddridge's is manifestly on a different plan, being strictly a paraphrase, statedly interspersed with "Improvements," as they are called. Owen's voluminous work, whatever may be its other excellencies, and however valuable many may esteem it as a book of reference, is certainly not a manual for general readers. To say nothing of its price, its bulk alone (that of seven closely-printed octavo volumes) forbids such use of it, even by those who may not find

the writer (as the late Mr. Hall of Leicester found him) “intolerably heavy and prolix.” The *four* “Lectures” by Jones of Nayland are very valuable and interesting; but are not in the form of an Exposition. On a subject so rich and inexhaustible, a variety of works may be read with advantage. No one writer, nor yet all together, can pretend, for a moment, to have done it justice.

The Author would gladly have enriched his pages with more “notes” from different writers, especially from St. Chrysostom, who abounds in valuable thoughts, but for the fear of making his book larger, and in other respects more repulsive to general readers, than he wishes it to be.

Having been, in a manner, obliged to enlarge on several preliminary points in the *Introduction*, he is unwilling to swell the volume by a long *Preface*: he would only, in conclusion, express his hope, as it is his prayer, that the work may prove interesting and (under the Divine Teaching¹) profitable to not a few; especially among those, who, with more or less of *attentive study*, are anxious to obtain large and accurate views of the inspired Epistles:—an object (from many causes) of no easy attainment, and which no one

¹ See Lect. VII.

cause, perhaps, has so much contributed to render both difficult and uncommon, as that grievous one—the shattering of Scripture into small fragments, the minute division of it into separate sentences, and sometimes even parts of sentences, by what Dr. Johnson might have called a *versicular dismemberment* of the sacred text.

Antigua,
Dec. 20, 1833.



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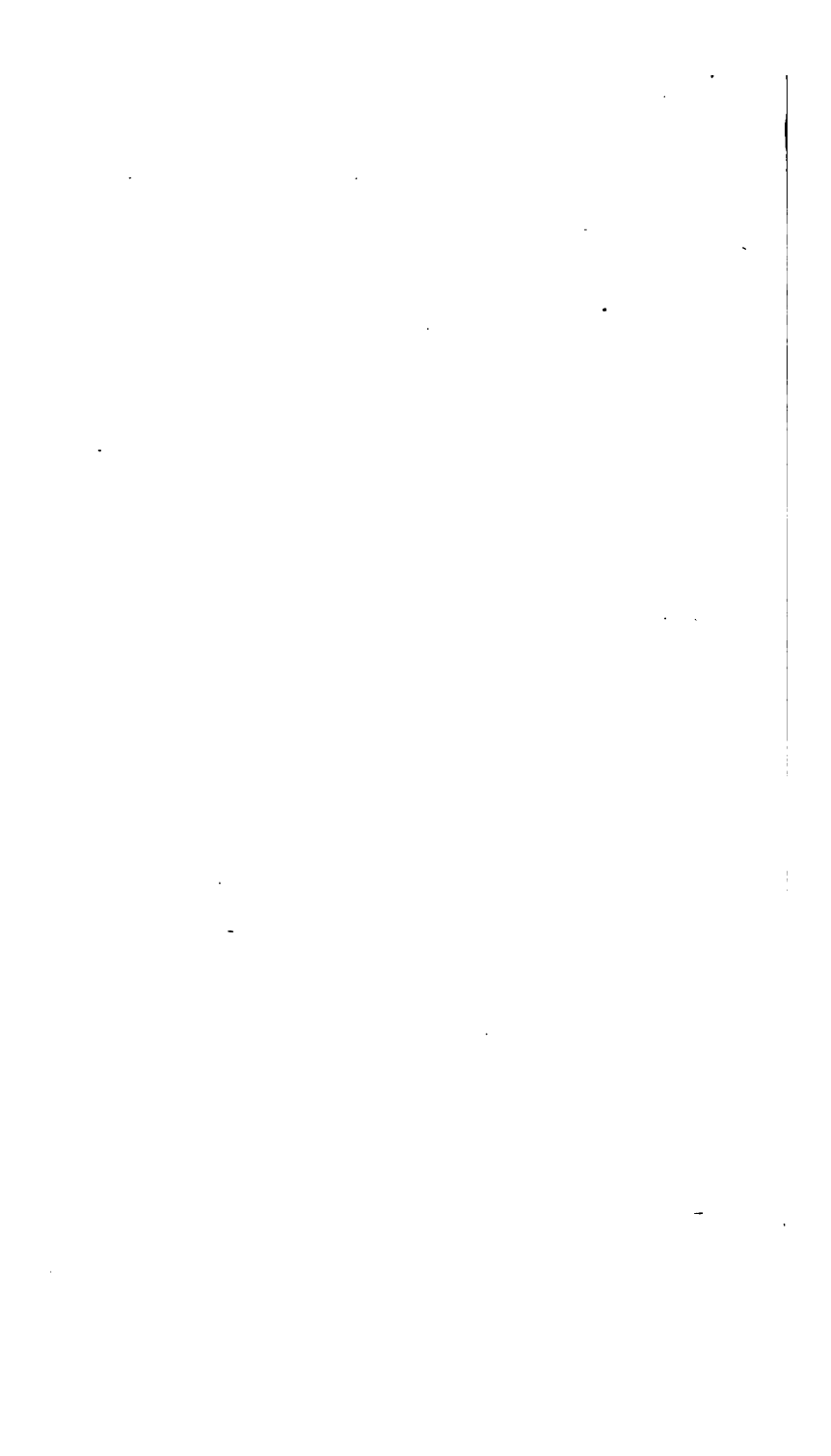
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INTRODUCTION.

THE EPISTLE—BY WHOM WRITTEN—IN WHAT LANGUAGE—WHO MEANT BY THE “HEBREWS”—BRIEF REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE HEBREW CHURCH: ITS STATE AT THE TIME—DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

THE “Epistle to the Hebrews” being destitute at the commencement (though only¹ at the commencement) of the Epistolary form, some, among the moderns, have even doubted if it be an *Epistle*; whilst the omission of St. Paul’s name (for which there were most weighty reasons²) led a few persons of note in the early Latin Church to question, if the “letter” (for such it is³) were *from St. Paul*. These latter doubts seem to have been set at rest before the end of the fourth century; and the Christian Church at large, in the *West*, as well as in the *East*, appears to have concurred in acknowledging not only the authenticity of the Epistle as part of the sacred canon, but its genuineness also

¹ See iii. 1; v. 11, 12; vi. 9, 10; x. 32. 34, with other similar passages, and particularly xiii. 22—25.

² See Lecture XIV.

³ See Ch. xiii. 22.

as being from St. Paul; and in prefixing to it the title or inscription which it still bears, and which is to be found¹, with one exception, in all the manuscripts now extant. The very circumstance of the fact being first *questioned*—(*rejected from the Canon* the Epistle never was in ancient times, excepting by heretics², to whom St. Paul, as a most powerful advocate for the truth, was peculiarly obnoxious)—but the very circumstance of the fact of its genuineness being first *questioned* in the warmth of controversy, then, on farther *inquiry*, universally admitted, should strengthen our belief of it. With such testimony, it would be unreasonable to attach much importance to objections, almost entirely of modern growth (and which have been abundantly refuted), founded chiefly on critical views of the style of the writer. For such views, though entertained by eminent men, are, after all, mere matter of opinion, often fanciful, at best uncertain, and by no means to be admitted as subversive of the evidence of antiquity on a question of *fact*.

Of the *internal evidence*, which the Epistle supplies, to show that it was written by St. Paul, some notice is taken in Lecture XIV.; to which the reader is referred.

As to the *original language* of the Epistle, the most credible opinion seems to be, that it was written either by St. Paul himself, or under his dictation, by St. Luke, in Greek, the general language of the New Testament; as the one best calculated to make the Epistle of extensive use even to persons of Hebrew

¹ See Grotius, L'Enfant, and Beza.

² Some of whom, as Marcion, rejected several of St. Paul's Epistles; others, as Ebion, all.

extraction, and still more to the rest of the world. It is possible that being written by St. Paul in Hebrew¹ or Syro-chaldaic for the Hebrews, it was by St. Luke, as his secretary, translated into Greek for the Jews of the dispersion and the Church at large. In either case, it would be the "Epistle of St. Paul."

"To the Hebrews:"—"The Hebrews," says Bishop Horsley, in one of his 'Charges,' "and *they of the circumcision*, were the earlier names, by which the Jewish converts, who formed the Church at Jerusalem, had been distinguished from the Christians of the Gentiles." We may add, from St. Chrysostom, that the title included the whole Church at Jerusalem and in Palestine generally, that is, "all the Churches in Judea," as well as the Jewish Christians of other countries, so far as they kept up a connexion with the Church at Jerusalem, which was clearly the metropolitan Hebrew Church, and to which, therefore, it is probable that the Epistle was more immediately addressed. In the New Testament, the term "Hebrew," sometimes distinguishes the Jew of Palestine, who spoke Hebrew or a dialect² of it, from the Grecian³ or Hellenistic Jew, who was born and bred in other countries, and who spoke Greek for the most part, or some other⁴ language, *not* Hebrew: it also denotes any one of Israelitish extraction, at least any such person who spoke Hebrew; as, for instance, in Phil.

¹ There is however no trace of a Hebrew copy of the Epistle to be met with. "I am persuaded," says Macknight, after a very clear and satisfactory examination of the question, "that our Greek copy is itself the Apostle's original letter."

² See John xix. 20, and Acts xxi. 40.

³ See Acts vi. 1.

⁴ See Acts ii. 8—11.

iii. 5, where St. Paul calls himself "a Hebrew of Hebrew parents," though born at Tarsus, but speaking "the Hebrew tongue," (Acts xxi. 40.) By Hebrews¹ then we understand the Jews of Palestine, including those, who, though not natives, kept up an intimate connexion with their paternal land, and spoke its language.

From the Epistle itself, it is evident that those immediately addressed in it were *converts* to Christianity (see Ch. iii. 1, 6. x. 32, &c.) of some standing (see Ch. v. 12): though in writing, the Apostle might also have in view the conversion of such as were still in unbelief, by whom the believing Jews were surrounded, and with whom they would naturally be exposed to continual discussions, similar to those which the Scribes and Pharisees and Herodians used to hold with our Lord, and their followers with his. Eusebius, indeed, gives us an account of such a discussion with St. James (the Less) at his martyrdom; which may be seen, by the English reader, in Cave's *Life of that Apostle*.

As to the *state of the Hebrew Church at the time* when the Epistle was written, it appears, in the first place, to have been exposed to persecution of a serious, if not of a sanguinary², character. But in order to judge better of this question, it may be advisable to take a brief review of the history of the Christian Church among the Hebrews from its foundation to the period with which we are more immediately concerned. The Hebrew Church had the peculiar honour of being

¹ The Hebrews were the "Jews of Palestine, who had embraced the faith of Christ." Bishop Blomfield on the Acts,—Lecture III.

² See Ch. xii. 4. Where the probability is implied of being called upon to "resist unto blood."

founded directly by our Lord himself. He was personally and visibly its Great Apostle, being "sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel¹." Under him, however, it was but as a "little flock," though destined in due time to extend its spiritual sway over the whole earth². At the time of our Lord's Ascension, we find the *Church of Jerusalem* assembling not more in number than "an hundred and twenty" (Acts i. 15): but, in ten days' time, that number was increased by the addition of "about three thousand souls" (Acts ii. 41), and from that time "the Lord added to the Church daily" such as embraced the salvation offered them and made their escape from sin (*ib.* 47). The Jewish rulers endeavoured to arrest its growth by persecution (Acts iv.); but it only increased the more by the addition of "multitudes" (v. 14), so as to "fill Jerusalem with the doctrine" of Christ (v. 28). Meanwhile the Apostles continue to be persecuted (v. 18, 40), Stephen is martyred (vii. 59), and with his martyrdom commences "a great persecution against the" whole "Church at Jerusalem:" a calamity, however, which was again overruled to the enlargement of the Hebrew Church (the only Christian Church as yet in existence) "throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria," even as far "as Phœnice, and Cyprus, and Antioch" (viii. 1, 5. xi. 19). This was "the Church" of which *Saul*, entering into private houses for the purpose of dragging men, and even women, to prison, at that time "made havoc" (viii. 3); and to which, about seven and twenty years after,

¹ Matt. xv. 24.

² "Fear not, *little flock*; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke xii. 32.

Paul wrote for the purpose of keeping them, under similar trials, stedfast in the faith. Even as far as Damascus had the Hebrew Church spread itself; and even to Damascus would Saul have followed it with "threatenings and slaughter," had he not been arrested in his course by his wonderful conversion: he then became himself at once the object of persecution, and found difficulty in escaping the violence which he had lately been fomenting (ix. 25).

For a time after this the Hebrew "Churches had rest throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria" (ix. 31): but not many years¹ elapsed before "Herod the king began to vex certain of the Church, and killed James, the brother of John, with the sword;" a circumstance which so pleased the Jews, that Herod sought, though without effect, to destroy Peter also (xii. 1—3). Such was *the spirit* which the unbelieving Jews had to struggle against amongst their unconverted brethren. Still the Hebrew Church continued to increase; and, at the next notice of it (about nine² years later), we find the number of Jews who had embraced the faith reckoned not merely by thousands, as it is in our translation, but (as it is in the original) by "tens of thousands³." Whether or not they were now exposed to persecution, we are not told: probably, their numbers were some security to them; and possibly, their zeal for the law may have conciliated their countrymen. For they were "all," the Christian, as well as the unbelieving Jews, "zealous for the law" (Acts xxi. 20); so much so, that even the former

¹ About 13.

² According to Dr. Burton.

³ "How many *myriads*," &c. Acts xxi. 20.

looked with no little suspicion upon St. Paul¹, when he went up at this period “to bring up alms to his nation, and offerings²” to God; whilst from his unconverted countrymen the Apostle of the Gentiles escaped with his life, only by the interference of the Roman soldiery. This was the last visit which St. Paul had made to Judea, when he wrote his Epistle³ to the Hebrews; and the last notice that we have of the Hebrew Church in the book of the Acts. The particulars to be gleaned from it are, as we have seen, that its numbers were very considerable, but that, still, the *national* feeling was violent in the extreme against a full and unreserved adoption of the Gospel, as a dispensation of mercy for all mankind, by which the services of the Temple were eventually to be superseded. The treatment which St. Paul experienced is proof sufficient to this effect; even if he had not expressly told us (in an Epistle written at a somewhat earlier period than that at which we have now arrived), that “the Churches of God which in Judea were in Christ Jesus, suffered” persecution “from the” unbelieving “Jews; who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and chased out” the Apostles, “forbidding them to speak to the Gentiles⁴.” If *now*, after the lapse of eight or ten years, the same churches escaped persecution, it was in part possibly, as we have intimated, because of their zeal for the law; which under such circumstances, they might be induced, as certainly they would be tempted, to carry to an unwarrantable

¹ Acts xxi. 21.

² Acts xxiv. 17.

³ Which he did about three years, probably, after his departure for Italy mentioned Acts xxvii. 1, &c.

⁴ 1 Thess. ii. 14.

length. It does not, however, follow, from the silence of St. Luke, that the 'churches in Judea' *were* exempt from persecution at this period. His narrative is concerned chiefly with St. Paul; and his notice of the Church at Jerusalem is, in this part at least, only incidental. From Heb. x. 34, ("For ye had compassion of me in *my bonds*, and took joyfully the *spoiling of your goods*") compared with Acts xxiv. 23, ("And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to *minister or come to him*,") it may, perhaps, be inferred that during St. Paul's two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea (Acts xxiv. 27), which followed his apprehension on this occasion, the believing Jews not only sympathized with him, but shared also in his persecutions, so far at least as to be plundered "of their goods"; unless we suppose this allusion to relate to events of a still later period, of which information had been brought to the Apostle in Italy.

For when disappointed in their designs against St. Paul by his removal to Rome, his persecutors directed their malice against St. James the Less¹, or the Just, as he was also called; being held by *all* the Jews² in the highest veneration for his singular wisdom, patriotism, and piety. This James was Bishop of Jerusalem, appointed, some writers assert, by our Lord himself, but according to the most probable

¹ Styled also "the Lord's brother," agreeably to the Hebrew idiom, as being a *near relative* of the Virgin Mary: *i. e.* her nephew.

² This was no uncommon thing. Ananias for instance was a Christian; but being "a devout man according to the law, he had a good report of *all the Jews* which dwelt" at Damascus. Acts, xxii. 12.

opinion, by the Apostolic College¹. To deprive the Christian Jews of such a Prelate, venerable at once for his Apostolic character, his great age (now upwards of ninety²), and the extraordinary reputation which he enjoyed even among his enemies, would appear to the persecutors of the Church the most effectual method of compassing its destruction. Unhappily a combination of circumstances proved, soon after, peculiarly favourable to their views. The Roman governor, Festus, died within a short³ time, apparently, after sending away Paul to Rome: and his successor, Albinus, not having arrived, the high-priest, Ananus, availing himself of his temporary position, “assembled the Sanhedrim, and brought before him the brother of Jesus (who was called Christ), whose name was James, and some others [or some his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation of them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned⁴”.

Thus it appears, that the imprisonment of St. Paul was the commencement of a persecution of a more general nature, in which the Apostle James⁵ (the Less),

¹ As Bishop we find St. James presiding on several important occasions noticed in the ‘Acts,’ and referred to as the individual of chief note and authority in the Church at Jerusalem. See Acts xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18. Gal. i. 19; ii. 9—12.

² See Cave. If St. James was of so great an age when he died, he must have been thirty-four years old when our Lord was born, older probably than the Virgin Mary.

³ See note from Eusebius—p. 10.

⁴ Josephus (Whiston) Ant. B. xx. c. 9.

⁵ Bishop Percy in his Key thus alludes to this event: “A severe persecution had deprived the Hebrews” [*i. e.* “the converted Jews of Palestine”] “of the Apostle James, and had rendered almost that whole Church wavering in the faith. To confirm some, and to recover others from their Apostasy, was the purport of this Epistle.”

the first Bishop of Jerusalem, with other of the more eminent Christians, suffered martyrdom; as St. Stephen had suffered about twenty-seven, and St. James, the brother of John, about fourteen years before. It is to these martyrs that allusion is supposed¹ to be made in Heb. xiii. 7² ("Remember your Guides, who spoke to you," &c. See the Greek); an opinion, as is shown above, more than probable, if, as Eusebius³ seems to say, St. James was put to death soon after

¹ So Theodoret, who wrote about 423, A. D.

² See Lect. XIII.

³ Eusebius certainly appears to speak of the martyrdom of St. James as directly *consequent* upon, and *subsequent* to the escape of St. Paul from the murderous intentions (Acts xxii. 22. and xxv. 3.) of the Jewish zealots. The passage is as follows:—

"The Jews, however, when Paul appealed to Cæsar and was sent by Festus to Rome, being disappointed of their expectation in the plot which they were preparing for him" [viz. that just referred to as noticed Acts xxv. 3.] "turn their efforts against James, the Lord's brother, to whom the See (*θρόνος*) of the bishopric of Jerusalem had been committed by the Apostles. Their attempt against him was as follows: Bringing him publicly forth, they sought of him a denial of the Christian faith; but when, contrary to the general opinion, he spoke, before all the multitude, openly and with more freedom than they anticipated, confessing Jesus, our Saviour and Lord, to be the Son of God, they were no longer able to endure the testimony of one, who, on account of the eminent wisdom and piety which he cultivated in his life, was believed by all to be a most righteous man, but put him to death; availing themselves of the want of any chief governor (*ἀναρχίαν*), as an opportunity of assuming to themselves authority for the purpose. For it is to be observed, that, *Festus having died in Judea at this point of time* (*κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ ῥῆ καίρῳ*), the local administration of affairs was left without any Governor or procurateur at its head."—Euseb. l. 2. c. 23. He then adds from Hegesippus a particular account of the manner of his death; of his being thrown from the summit of the Temple, then stoned (as Josephus relates), and finally despatched with a fuller's club. The whole account may be seen in Cave or Lardner.

St. Paul was sent to Rome, and ere the rage, thus disappointed, had had time to cool.

But persecution was not the only trial to which the Hebrew Church was exposed. It was in still greater danger from the seduction of "*false teachers*", to whom there is frequent allusion in the course of the Epistle:—teachers, who whether to gratify their vanity, or to justify their immoral lives, or "lest they should suffer persecution¹," "brought in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them²." For the purpose of avoiding persecution, it was important (see Galat. vi. 12.) to conciliate the Jews by upholding the Jewish ritual, as at least of equal obligation with the Gospel (See Heb. xiii. 9, &c.) Of the existence of such "*false-brethren*" amongst the Christian Jews of other countries we have full evidence, especially in the Epistle to the Galatians, and in those of St. Jude and St. Peter. It is not probable that Judea should have been free from them, but rather that they should have abounded⁴ more there than elsewhere, particularly in the then disturbed state of the country, and after the recent loss of their Apostolic Bishop. Indeed, from the first there was a great inclination on the part of the Jewish converts, especially among the Pharisees who embraced Christianity, to pervert the gospel by

¹ Gal. vi. 12.

² 2 Pet. ii. 1. See also the Ep. of St. Jude.

³ Gal. ii. 4.

⁴ Such seems to have been the tendency to pervert the Gospel among the Jewish believers, that the very name (Nazarenes) by which they were known at first from other Jews, became soon the distinctive appellation of a *sect of heretics*. (Mosheim, vol. i. c. 5. Bp. Horsley—'Charges.') Hence it is to be feared that the Hebrew Church at large did not benefit permanently by this Epistle.

blending it with the Mosaic services¹, and so, "by being Jews and Christians at once, to be neither Jews nor Christians²." This mischief, begun by the Pharisees, was continued and increased by the heretics who soon arose, and particularly in Judea.

The history of the early *heresiarchs* is involved in much obscurity. Whilst, by God's good providence, the Truth has been preserved to us in his own blessed Word, the errors, against which his servants indirectly wrote, can scarcely be ascertained. He has "gathered his wheat into the garner;" but "the chaff" has been blown away, or "burnt" up by the "fiery trials" to which it has been exposed. And hence, perhaps, we should learn an important lesson; namely, that error should not be kept alive in perpetuating truth. Our reasoning should be rather *confirmative*, than *confutatory*. Some knowledge indeed of the *existence* of different errors at *particular times or places*, and of their *general* character, may be of great use in interpreting the oracles of truth; and so far history seems still to lend us light. For on referring to it, not only are we informed of the early existence, in the churches of Asia Minor, of the licentious Nicolaitans (mentioned Rev. ii. 6, 14, 15.); but we also find, among the early Hebrew heretics, the notorious names of *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, who, according to Dr. Burton³, were cotemporaries,⁴ and lived towards the end of the first century. Waterland places Cerinthus "early enough to have

¹ Acts xv. i.

² Jerome, as quoted by Bishop Horsley.

³ "Bampton Lectures." Lect. VI. and notes.

⁴ Waterland places only 12 years between them; the one heresy rising, as the other set.

spread his heresy," not only "before St. John wrote his Epistles," but "even before St. Paul wrote some of his¹."

As to the nature of *their opinions*, there is a singular co-incidence between them and the errors combated or alluded to in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Both "the Cerinthians and Ebionites are taxed by all antiquity with the impiety" of teaching doctrines which sunk our blessed Lord into the rank of a mere man². Cerinthus denied even the miraculous conception of our Lord, and supposed the world to be the work of angels³. Both these heretics agreed in observing some parts of Judaism, even while they rejected others⁴: and the "moral practice of both is stated to have been licentious⁵."

Against the influence of some such teachers the Epistle to the Hebrews is evidently directed. Their pernicious doctrines may not have been broached to the world at large, so as to be generally noticed and to form the features of a distinct heresy, until some years later. But the seed would be scattered, before the tree grew: the seduction might be spreading in Palestine, ere it became notorious in Christendom. St. Paul clearly intimates that some such "*root of bitterness*" (poisonous doctrine productive of licentiousness) was "*springing up*" in the Hebrew Church,

¹ Vol. v. 175.

² Bishop Horsley's "Charges." See also Dr. Burton's "Bampton Lectures," I. and note 80. Comp. Heb. i. ii.

³ Comp. Heb. i. 10—14. See Dr. Burton as before.

⁴ Comp. Heb. xiii. 8, &c. *passim*.—See Dr. Burton as before.

⁵ Dr. Burton, p. 184, and Lect. VI. Comp. Heb. xii. 15, 16. xiii. 4.

and that "thereby many" were in danger of "being defiled¹." It was "*springing up*;" though it had not yet attained to a conspicuous height. The Upas-tree was beginning to grow. Probably the Apostle had *observed* it when at Jerusalem about three years before²; and he might have *heard* more of it afterwards, when he received the account of St. James's death. Such circumstances would naturally stir up his truly patriotic³ and apostolic spirit, zealous at once for the good of his country and for the purity of the gospel, to address to them, whether of his own accord or at the request of others, the affectionate, powerful, and solemn "word of exhortation"⁴ and of warning contained in this epistle.

The *date* of the Epistle is placed by most critics somewhere between 61 and 64 A.D., but by Dr. Burton as early as 58. The latter opinion appears to be best supported by a reference to the intimations of time to be met with in Josephus and others.

Upon the whole then the probabilities are, that 'the Epistle to the Hebrews' was written, in Greek and from Italy⁵ (see ch. xiii. 24), by St. Paul, at the close of his first imprisonment at Rome, to the Christian Jews of Jerusalem and Palestine, soon after the martyrdom of their first Bishop, St. James, "the Lord's brother," for the purpose of supporting them under persecution, and guarding them from the seductions

¹ Ch. xii. 15.

² As narrated in Acts, xxi. 21, &c. &c.

³ See Rom. ix. 1—5.

⁴ Ch. xiii. 22.

⁵ Though not "by Timothy," as stated in the unauthorized subscription; for Timothy was to accompany the Apostle. xiii. 23.

of certain ‘false teachers,’ who, by licentious and Judaizing doctrines, would have caused them to “fall away¹” both in practice and in faith even to the denying of the atonement and divinity of our blessed Lord.

¹ See ch. vi. 4. &c.

LECTURE I.

PRE-EMINENCE, ABOVE THE ANGELS, OF OUR GREAT
APOSTLE, THE SON OF GOD.

HEB. i. 1.—ii. 4.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. i. 1, 2.

EVERY religion derives importance, more or less, from the rank of its first Teachers. Even the different parts of divine revelation, the different dispensations of the Almighty himself, partake, in some degree of the character of those to whom they are given in charge. When God sends a more important messenger, we may well conclude it is on a more important message. This is the argument with which the apostle St. Paul opens his Epistle to the Hebrews; in order that we may learn to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with the utmost reverence, and be afraid of ever treating it, by any means, with contempt or even with neglect.

If we look back upon the gradual progress of that elder revelation, which preceded Christ, and which is

now embodied in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, we shall observe, that it was not all delivered *at once*, or in the *same manner*, but in many different parts, succeeding each other “at sundry times,” and conveyed in almost as many “divers manners.” Not

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. i. 1.

only are the historical books distinct from the Psalms, Proverbs, or Canticles, and those again from the Prophets, but in each of these divisions several inspired writers were employed by God to record his word for our instruction, and that too at widely *distant periods* from each other. The *manner* also in which the revelation was communicated to ‘the man of God,’ as ~~well as that in which it was~~ by him conveyed to the people, varied considerably in different instances. To some, for example, as to Moses, “the Lord spake face to face, even apparently, and not in dark speeches¹,” whilst to others “He made himself known in a vision, or spake unto them in a dream².” Thus did God, at sundry times, in the different parts of his revealed word, and by the divers methods which it seemed fit to his unerring wisdom to adopt, speak formerly to the Jewish fathers by the prophets who succeeded each other from Moses to Malachi.

Great, unquestionably, was the reverence ever due to the word of God, even when conveyed only by mortal men. It was still a heavenly treasure, though carried “in earthen vessels.” And great was the condescending grace of God in vouchsafing to hold any communication, by whatever methods, with our

¹ Exod. xxxiii. 11. Num. xii. 8.

² Num. xii. 6.

fallen race, and, in any manner or degree, to reveal to us his will. But these were but the beginnings of mercies, but dawnings of the light of heaven. The full display of divine revelation was reserved for the closing periods of the merciful dispensations of the Almighty, even for “these last days” in which we live under the gospel, and in which God “hath spoken to us by his Son,” his First-born, his Well-beloved, even the Only-begotten of the Father, “whom he hath appointed Heir of all things.”

i. 2.

For it is not by adoption, as we ourselves may be, ~~that Christ~~ is the Son and Heir of God; but in a pre-eminent sense, quite peculiar to himself, and exclusive of all participation with any created being;—so the Son, as to be of the same nature with the Father, even one with Him¹ in the eternal essence of God; so the Heir, as to be equally with the Father Lord of all things. For what saith the apostle? Does he not clearly declare, that “by Him God made the worlds; that he is the brightness of His glory, and the express Image of His Person, and that he upholdeth all things by the word of his power?”

i. 2. 3.

Ask the veriest child in the Christian Church, Who it was that made the worlds? and will he not tell you, and tell you truly, It was God. Nay, “search the Scriptures,” and do they not give the same reply? But we are here assured, that the worlds, not this alone, but *all* worlds, were made by Christ. He, the

¹ “I and my Father are one,” John x. 30. “That they may be one as We are.” John xvii. 11. and also 22.

Second Person in the eternal Trinity, was the Agent by whom the power of the Godhead was exerted in the mighty work. "All things were made by Him; and without him was not any thing made," not even one "that was made¹."

Christ, then, is one with God the Father;—One in nature, though distinct in personal existence; *deriving*, indeed, his nature from God, as the Son from the Father, but that nature truly divine. He is the Effulgence in short of his Father's glory, "Light of Light;" and not merely an image, as Adam was, in a humble degree, of God's dominion and immortality, of his wisdom or holiness, but the express Image, the direct Impress of his Person, "Very God of Very God."

Accordingly, we find not only creation, which is clearly a divine work, but the other acts and prerogatives of the Godhead, in like manner, attributed to Christ; and that, too, with an express acknowledgment of his infinite power, conveyed in the terms which are used of God, and of God alone. Thus, in the passage before us, the Son of God is said to "uphold all things;" not a part only of the system of things, but the whole. He made the worlds; He upholds the universe. "All things were made by Him," without "even one" exception, and all things without exception are by Him preserved in being. Nor is this all: He upholds the worlds, not as a mere instrument or secondary cause, but by his own almighty decree, "by the word of his power."

True it is, most wonderfully, most mysteriously,

¹ John i. 3.

most graciously true, that this same exalted Person, who made and upholds both us and all things, did by Himself, yea, by Himself, in his own sacred Person, make an expiation for our sins. He it was, our Creator and Preserver, the Author and Supporter of our being, who gave himself up to death for us on the cruel and ignominious cross. But no sooner had he finished this work of inconceivable condes-

When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. i. 3.

cension and love, than the divinity of his Person again shone forth in its natural lustre. The humiliation, which his love for our fallen souls had made necessary, being accomplished, He raised himself to life by his eternal Spirit of holiness, and sat down once more¹, his human nature thenceforth partaking in the glory of his divine, “on the right hand of the Majesty on high,” “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come².”

The messengers generally employed by the Almighty, under the Old Testament dispensations, were prophets; but on certain special occasions, and particularly at the delivery of the Law, we find angels also engaged in this service. For on that occasion, we are told, “the chariots of God were twenty thousand, even thousands of angels³.” Yea, “the Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir: He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten

¹ “And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” John xvii. 5.

² Eph. i. 20.

³ Ps. lxxviii. 17.

thousands of Saints ; when from his right hand the fiery law went¹” forth for Israel. Impressed with these extraordinary circumstances of heavenly grandeur, which attended the delivery of their Law, it was not strange that the Hebrews (as the Jews of Palestine were called) should, if we may so speak, be proud of their religion, and disposed to look with jealousy or even with contempt upon other creeds. Nay, it is not to be wondered at, that even those Hebrews, who embraced the Christian faith, should be occasionally tempted to slight the Gospel ; when their minds went back, in all the strength of early association, to the awful glories of Sinai ; especially if there were those amongst them then, as there, undoubtedly, were not long after, (and as, alas ! there have been since in the Christian world even to the present hour,) who regarded Christ as a mere man, equal only to Moses, and therefore inferior to the holy angels. Under such circumstances, how seasonable was it that St. Paul should begin his letter to the Hebrew Christians with setting forth so strongly the pre-eminent dignity of our Lord above all created beings, and with showing, in particular, his vast superiority to the angels !

For when the Son of God “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,” he was made or “became,” saith the apostle, “so much better than the angels as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they ;”—a Name, i. 4. so much more excellent, as that of the Son and Heir is above that of a servant.

¹ Deut. xxxiii. 2.

For Christ, as St. Paul has already stated, and as he now proceeds to show from the Old Testament itself, is the Only-begotten Son of God, whom the angels of God are not to vie with in presumptuous rivalry, but with humility to worship. For what are they, by natural inheritance, but ministering spirits? whose highest glory it is to “do the commandments of God, and hearken unto the voice of his word¹,” with a zeal and energy, of which the wind and the lightning supply the fittest emblems².

For this their obedience, we may well propose them as examples to ourselves, whose sluggish compliance with the divine will is a disgrace to our rational nature. Nay, we are expressly commanded by our Lord himself, to make it one of our prayers, that *we* may do the will of God on earth, as *they* do it in heaven.

But whilst you look up to the angels as lofty examples of obedience, beware of setting them on an equality with Christ. For Christ is not a ministering spirit, but the King Eternal. Of Him it is that the Psalmist speaks, when he exclaims,

“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” He it is to whom, as a Messenger of God, pre-eminent above all others for his “love of righteousness and hatred of ini-

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the Angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire. i. 5—7.

But unto the Son he saith, ‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity:

¹ Ps. ciii. 20.

² Ps. civ. 4.

therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' And, 'Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest, and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.'
i. 8-12.

quity," so as to be willing even to suffer death in order to destroy sin, the Father gave the cheering unction of the Holy Spirit without measure¹, and not in limited proportions, as to those created beings, whether men or angels, whom he had previously employed as his ambassadors to mankind. Far above these his "fellow"-messengers, was Christ distinguished by the peculiar presence of the Spirit of God; for "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily²." Such, then, was the pre-eminence of our Lord, as not only asserted by the Apostle, but spoken of beforehand in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It was of Him, too, that it was said; "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of *thy* hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." He is, in short, by the united testimony both of the New Testament and also of the Old, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Lord Jehovah, who is from everlasting to everlasting, the unchangeable God, who inhabiteth eternity.

In like manner does the Old Testament bear witness to the exaltation of our Lord to the right hand of the Majesty

But to which of the angels said He at any

¹ "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." John iii. 34.

² Col. ii. 9.

on high, there to await, till all his enemies be subdued under his feet, whilst the angels, as we have seen, are described only as “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister” to Christ, in the various dispensations of divine mercy, “for those who were to be heirs of salvation.”

time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? i. 13, 14.

Conducted by the inspired penman, we have “considered the great Apostle of our profession, Christ Jesus”—his pre-eminence, above all other messengers of God, as the Son of the Father, the Heir of all things, the Maker of heaven and earth, Light of Light, Very God of Very God; who did indeed humble himself for a time to suffer death for man, but was soon exalted again to the right hand of his Father in heaven. We have seen how superior such an Apostle is not to prophets only, but also (as the Old Testament itself testifies) to the angelic ministers of his word, whom God employed in the elder dispensations;—as superior as the Only-begotten is to a servant, as the Object of adoration is to those that worship him, as the everlasting Creator to the works of his hands, as the King Supreme in the throne of God to those that wait in his courts to execute his behests throughout his kingdom.

The subject is beyond measure mysterious and beyond measure sublime;—too sublime, it may be thought, and too mysterious, to be of much practical application. No, my friends, fall not into such an error. The object of St. Paul in writing to the Hebrews was eminently *practical*. It was nothing less than to keep them stedfast, and to urge them to

proficiency, in the Christian faith, notwithstanding any Jewish prejudices or predilections by which they might be tempted to disparage the Gospel, any false teachers who might lead them to pervert it, or any persecutions by which they might be driven to abandon it altogether. What more conducive to put them on their guard against these dangers, than to set before them the pre-eminent dignity, the far more than angelic greatness, the truly divine Majesty, of the Great Apostle or Ambassador of the Gospel-pro-
 session, even Christ Jesus our Lord? And, now, observe the practical lesson, which, at the beginning of his second chapter, St. Paul inculcates, as following from the doctrine of the first:—"Therefore," he says, "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest

ii. 1, 2. at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by Angels" to the Israelites "was stedfast," so that it could not be set aside, but "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by *the Lord*, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also¹ bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

Our circumstances, brethren, differ widely, in many respects, from those of the Hebrews. We are not

¹ "The Comforter —, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."
John xv. 26, 27.

we have to overcome, the Son of God can remove by making us “willing in the day of his power¹,” if we do but look to Him for help, and carefully employ the grace which He bestows.

Thus, then, a belief in the divinity of Christ furnishes a ground of the greatest confidence in his salvation. It also furnishes a solemn admonition, as urged by St. Paul, to “give the more earnest heed, lest at any time we let slip the things which we have heard” in the blessed Gospel. The mind is here compared to a leaky vessel, into which the most precious wine may be poured, or, as into a lamp, the sacred oil necessary to sustain the light of truth, but from which it gradually runs out and is lost. So is it we receive the precious and sacred teaching of the Gospel. Whilst reading the Word of God in private, or hearing it explained to us in Sermons, our minds appear to be full of the important truths which it conveys : but alas ! how soon do most of us suffer the things which we have heard or read to pass away, as from vessels which will not permanently retain that which they receive ! Oh ! my brethren, let not *your* minds thus receive the truths, which you have heard either now or heretofore. Deceive not yourselves by a present attention, to be followed by a speedy forgetfulness. Strive to keep, as well as to receive, the truth. Not only hear it with readiness ; but remember it with care, retain it with affection. For consider the affront of which we shall be guilty against the divine Majesty, if we carelessly “let slip” the things which God hath spoken to us in these last days, not by prophets, nor yet by angels,

¹ Ps. cx. 3.

but by his only-begotten Son. Observe, I pray you, the force and solemnity of the Apostle's language, "*How* shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" What further overtures of mercy do we expect? What other messenger do we look for? Surely it is the "last" trial of our perverse spirits, when the Lord of the vineyard, "having yet One Son, his Well-beloved, sends Him also" unto us, notwithstanding the insulting and cruel treatment which, "at sundry times" his servants the prophets received. When the Heir of all things lays aside his eternal glory in the heavens, to commune with our fallen race; leaving his hosts of heavenly creatures, the ninety and nine sheep that are safe, the righteous in the angelic worlds, to come down to our wilderness here below, and seek for the sheep that was lost, to call sinful man to repentance, shall we despise, or even be insensible to, either the awful importance of such a fact, or the "tender mercy" which it implies? For it is not presumptuous rebellion only, which exposes us to danger. *That* is indeed the most aggravated degree of guilt, and will doubtless, as in the case of the husbandmen in the vineyard, be punished accordingly. But there is danger, as we have seen, awful danger, in inattention, in forgetfulness, in "neglect." The Apostle does not say, if we reject, despise, oppose, but "if we *neglect* so great salvation, how shall we escape?" And yet—how easy, yea and how common a thing is it, to neglect the Gospel! I allude not to the conduct of decided unbelievers, though many there may be even of these wearing the garb of a Christian profession; but I would speak of the thoughtless, careless, *negligent* Christian: one who does not deny the truth of our religion, who

does not disbelieve it, who knows Christ to be the Son of God, who acknowledges the New Testament to be His word, spoken either directly by himself or indirectly by his Apostles, and confirmed by the irresistible testimony of the Holy Ghost given, to the Jews and to the world, in innumerable signs and wonders, with divers miracles, and with gifts more clearly divine:—one, I say, who, acknowledging all this, yet neglects so great salvation! Of such it is that I now speak; to such it is that I would repeat the Apostle's warning,—How shall they escape? And think not that the admonition concerns not ourselves. We are all in danger, from outward temptations and inward inclination, of neglecting the salvation preached to us by Christ. It is a melancholy fact; but a *fact* it is, and one which should awaken us from our spiritual insensibility to greater earnestness in taking heed to what we hear, that we may not lose our part in “the Gospel,” but may partake in its glories, when the Son of God, who came once in the humility of our nature to preach salvation, shall come again in his own divine Majesty to accomplish its everlasting triumph, and place for ever beyond the risk of falling those, who now, amidst continual danger, “give earnest heed” to his blessed word.

LECTURE I.

Heb. i. 1.—ii. 4.

NOTES.

(P. 17.) *The Apostle Paul opens his Epistle to the Hebrews.*—See the Introduction and Lecture XIV. for some observations as to the *writer* of the Epistle, and the persons or Church *written to*.

(P. 18.) *In many different parts.*—Πολυμερῶς, i. 1.

(P. 18.) *To the Jewish fathers.*—τοῖς πατέραςιν, sc. ἡμῶν τῶν Ἑβραίων: which increases the probability that the Epistle was written, originally at least, by St. Paul; and that if St. Luke (who was only a proselyte) was employed, it was simply to translate it into Greek for the use of the Hellenistic Jews and the Church generally.

(P. 20.) *Not even one.*—οὐδὲ ἓν. See *John* i. 3.

(P. 20.) *The effulgence.*—“The,” not “an.” See Bishop Middleton on the Greek Article.

(P. 20.) *Impress.*—χαρακτήρ, i. 3.

(P. 20.) *Person*, i. 3.]—ὑπόστασις, which *here* corresponds to the Latin “subsistentia;” as, in ch. xi. 1, it answers more nearly to the English “understanding.” The same word, in different connexions, may have very different significations, yet each derived from the same root. Take, for instance, the word *στάσις* itself, which signifies, when applied to the wind, “a calm;” when applied to a people, “a sedition:” yet both meanings are derived from the notion of “standing,” (in the one case, “still;” in the other, “apart.”) So *ὑπόστασις* may denote the basis or support, at one time, only of our opinion; at another, of our

very being;—that on which our distinct existence stands, and which, in the case of *intelligent* beings, we call “person,” but *generally* “substance.”

It is clearly implied that the Person of the Son is distinct from, and as real as, that of the Father : ὡςπερ ἐστὶν ὁ Πατήρ ἐννύστατος, καὶ πρὸς ὑπόστασιν οὐδενὸς δεόμενος, οὕτω καὶ ὁ Υἱός. *Chrysostom, in loc.*

It may here be remarked, how the very errors of the heretics prove, by implication, *the different parts* of the orthodox doctrine ; that of Arius, for instance, the Personality, that of Sabellius the divinity, of our Lord. Had not our Saviour been spoken of in Scripture and in the Catholic faith as a distinct Person from the Father, he would never have been considered as only a Created being : had he not been believed in as divine, he would not have been regarded as One and the same Person with the Father. Error has generally been an *elliptical* perversion of the truth ; a confining of the view to only a *part* of it ; dividing it, as it were, with a prism, and taking one or two rays (as Southey has well observed in his *Life of Wesley*, Vol. I. p. 332, 1st ed.) for the whole light.

(P. 22.) *Hebrews, as the Jews of Palestine are called.*—See the Introduction.

(P. 22.) *Who regarded Christ as a mere man.*—Such as the Ebionites and Cerinthians. See the Introduction.

(P. 22.) *Became,*—γενόμενος,

(P. 22.) *Hath inherited.*—εὐκληρονόμηκεν.

(P. 23.) *Thou art my Son, &c. i. 5.*—The second Psalm is evidently prophetic of the Messiah, (ver. 2, where see the Hebrew and compare *Acts* iv. 26.) and can be applied to David (of whom, by the way, it makes no mention) only in a very confined sense. The same may be said of the passage next referred to, *2 Sam.* vii. 14. ; which is also applicable to Solomon only in a limited sense, pointing, through him, to the Christ, David's Son and Lord, in whom “The kingdom” was to be really established for ever. Part of the 14th verse may, indeed, appear altogether inapplicable to Christ ; but we must remember, that “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,” (*Isa.* liii. 6.) and to him, therefore, *as our Surety*, even such expressions may apply. They apply to Christ as the Representative of

of faith, if not all modes of conduct, are equally good or bad, or, in other words, alike indifferent;—when thus, under the shelter of a false liberality of sentiment, error grows and thrives, to the manifest prejudice of saving truth, surely it is not unnecessary to guard you against its deadly poison, by directing your attention to the faith once delivered to the saints in the pages of Holy Writ.

Forget not, then, amidst the errors of your own hearts, or the delusion of worldly wisdom, the emphatic terms in which the divine Majesty of our Lord is set forth in the beginning of this inspired Epistle. See what importance the sacred writer attaches to a right faith in the Son of God; and ever remember in whom it is that you trust as the Saviour of your souls, not in a mere man, nor yet in the mightiest and holiest of the angels, but in the Only-begotten of the Father, in the Creator, Preserver, and Lord of the universe. What confidence should this consideration give us “in the strength of our salvation!” The God of heaven and earth, from his intense love of righteousness, comes down from on high to destroy the works of the devil, and undertakes to save us from our sins by dying for them *Himself*. And shall he not save us! In such a Being can we doubt the power, or, after such a proof, can we doubt the willingness, to accomplish the gracious work? If *we* are but willing, there can be no impediment to our salvation. There may be difficulties, there may be trials; but, with such a Saviour, there can be no insurmountable hindrances to our recovery. Even if we are naturally unwilling to be saved from our sinful desires and habits, yet this reluctance, the greatest obstacle which

we have to overcome, the Son of God can remove by making us “willing in the day of his power¹,” if we do but look to Him for help, and carefully employ the grace which He bestows.

Thus, then, a belief in the divinity of Christ furnishes a ground of the greatest confidence in his salvation. It also furnishes a solemn admonition, as urged by St. Paul, to “give the more earnest heed, lest at any time we let slip the things which we have heard” in the blessed Gospel. The mind is here compared to a leaky vessel, into which the most precious wine may be poured, or, as into a lamp, the sacred oil necessary to sustain the light of truth, but from which it gradually runs out and is lost. So is it we receive the precious and sacred teaching of the Gospel. Whilst reading the Word of God in private, or hearing it explained to us in Sermons, our minds appear to be full of the important truths which it conveys: but alas! how soon do most of us suffer the things which we have heard or read to pass away, as from vessels which will not permanently retain that which they receive! Oh! my brethren, let not *your* minds thus receive the truths, which you have heard either now or heretofore. Deceive not yourselves by a present attention, to be followed by a speedy forgetfulness. Strive to keep, as well as to receive, the truth. Not only hear it with readiness; but remember it with care, retain it with affection. For consider the affront of which we shall be guilty against the divine Majesty, if we carelessly “let slip” the things which God hath spoken to us in these last days, not by prophets, nor yet by angels,

¹ Ps. cx. 3.

Law. To Him it looked forward continually in all its ordinances, and throughout all its revelations. The Gospel of his kingdom, though clearly manifested only by Himself and his Apostles, was most copiously attested by Moses and the Prophets. To them, therefore, in preaching, and especially in preaching to the Jews, the Christian teacher did naturally and necessarily appeal. To them, in writing to the Hebrews, St. Paul refers his brethren for proof, most various and most abundant, of those Christian truths to which it was desirable, under their particular circumstances, more expressly to draw their attention.

It is by such an appeal to the Jewish Scriptures, that the Apostle has shown, in the first chapter of his Epistle, the pre-eminent dignity of Christ above all previous messengers of God, whether human or angelic; thence inferring, at the commencement of the second chapter, the danger incurred by neglecting that salvation, to proclaim which so glorious a Messenger was employed.

This, as you will remember, was the subject of our opening discourse on this Epistle. On the present occasion we have to consider the remaining part of the second chapter, commencing, at the fifth verse,

Ver. 5. with the words of my text. "For
 unto the angels hath He not put in
subjection the world to come, whereof we speak."

The peculiar danger of the Hebrew Christians arose from the temptation to judaize, to which they were exposed; that is to say, a temptation to place the law on a level with, if not above, the Gospel: and one great argument to this effect, against which St. Paul took pains to fortify them, was that derived from the

employment of angels under the dispensations of the law. Already has the Apostle shown that the angels are far inferior to Christ, they being only *servants*, He the everlasting *Son*, of God; the angels *worshippers*, Christ the *object of their adoration*; the angels ministering *creatures*, Christ their eternal King and *Creator*, the true *God*, the everlasting *Lord* of heaven and earth.

In the passage now before us the Hebrews, and through them we also, are farther dissuaded from any overweening reverence for angels, as compared with Christ, by the consideration that, however holy and high they may be in their proper rank, yet not to them was promised in Scripture the dominion over that world, or sacred society, which was always expected to come, and of which the Apostles spoke clearly under the title of the Church or kingdom of God. For it is thus, that, in accordance with most commentators, I would explain the expression, “the world to come,” as *here* used. It is a *world*, or vast society, as embracing individuals of all times, from Adam to his latest posterity, and throughout every “inhabited” region under heaven. Nay in this “world” not only human beings are included. Towards the close of the Epistle, the angels also are spoken of as belonging to it, not as having rule over it, but as forming part of it. For the city of the living God, of the celestial polity¹ of which Christians are admitted members, “the Jerusalem above²,” the “religious world” of the New Testament, comprises in it “an innumerable company of angels,”

¹ “No more strangers and foreigners, but *fellow-citizens* with the saints.” *Eph.* ii. 19.

² *Gal.* iv. 26.

together with "the general assembly and Church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect"¹.

This world is called "the world *to come*," as being the grand consummation of things held out from the first to the hopes of the faithful: and, indeed, even now, though the kingdom of heaven has been emphatically set up² upon earth in the Gospel, it has to struggle, as yet, with the kingdom of darkness. It is not yet "come" in the fulness of its "power and glory." The Church continues to pray daily in the words of the King himself,—*"Thy kingdom come:"* and even should it become far more prevalent on earth than it has been, so that the world, speaking generally, Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, bond and free, should become Christian, still it will be to heaven that believers must look for the full establishment of the kingdom of God. The Church, militant on earth, is introductory only to the Church triumphant in heaven. That triumphant Church is, emphatically, "the world to come" spoken of by the Apostles in the Gospel.

Not to angels, then, but to the Son of Man has this world been put in subjection. Observe, for instance, the prophecy contained in the eighth Psalm: "What is man," inquires the Psalmist, "that thou art mindful

But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with

of" a being apparently so insignificant amidst the wonders of thy hand? "or the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him" with such extraordinary privileges? placing him a little lower than the angels; yet

¹ Ch. xii. 22; &c.

² See Dan. ii. 44.

crowning him with such glory and honour, as to make him an image of thine own authority, thy vicegerent and representative on earth, to whom all things should be in subjection. The words of the Psalmist are applicable, in a limited sense, to the first Adam, and, in some degree, to his fallen descendants: but, for their *full* meaning, we must look to the “Second Adam.” He is the true Representative of God, not only deriving authority from the Father as his Vicegerent upon earth, but being the express Image of his Person, by whom the glory of the Godhead shines forth throughout all the universe. Never “yet,” before the coming of Christ, had that *universal* dominion been witnessed of which the Psalmist speaks. “All things,” he says, were subjected to the Son of man: “nothing was left,” which was not put under him. This, however, was not the case with Adam: his rule was confined to the earth, and even there was circumscribed within certain limits. Much more circumscribed still has been the rule of Adam’s descendants. It is often with much difficulty that they maintain their dominion even over the brute creation. But observe, on the other hand, the unlimited, yea, the Almighty power displayed by Him, who is emphatically called *the Son of Man*; His dominion over all nature, animate or inanimate, as proved by the number of miracles which He wrought, even whilst he sojourned amongst us in the form of a servant. Of

glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. ver. 6—8.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. ver. 9.

Him the words of the Psalmist are most literally true. They may receive a partial accomplishment, as most of the prophecies do, in some inferior subject: but the full verification of this, as of most other prophecies, is to be looked for in the Saviour of mankind.

True it is that, even in Christ, the world has "not yet seen" that dominion fully exhibited, which the Psalmist ascribes to the Son of Man. His kingdom, as we have said, is not yet completely come. He has given proofs of his sovereignty; but has not, as yet, exercised it universally. On the contrary we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels; taking upon him not the angelic, but our mortal nature, "that, by the grace of God, he might taste death for every one." In this very circumstance, however, the prediction of the Psalmist was the more completely fulfilled. For He, to whom supreme, universal dominion was to be given, was to be a man, and the son of man: and though he humbled himself below the angels, even unto death, yet was He, on that very account¹, "crowned with glory and honour."

With all the humiliation of Christ there was, indeed, a mysterious blending of glory and honour. The halo of divinity rested on his head even in his greatest abasement; yea, when that sacred head hung drooping upon the cross. The very persons who crucified him were constrained to cry out, that truly it was God's acknowledged Son whom they had nailed to the accursed tree. But still more conspicuously was Jesus

¹ "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name," &c. *Philip*. ii. 8, 9. See also *Heb.* xii. 2. and *Rom.* iv. 25.

“crowned with glory and honour,” when he rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven to resume that glory which He had with his Father before the world began.

And here, brethren, let us pause awhile to consider the exaltation which our nature has received through the condescension of our blessed Lord.

We often hear much of the “dignity of human nature;” and, when properly understood, the subject is one which we may contemplate with the greatest profit. But let us understand clearly in what the dignity of our nature really consists;—not alas! in that we are naturally prone to every thing that is good and excellent. This dignity was lost at our “Fall” in Adam. By disobedience our nature became corrupt; and our *natural* proneness now is not to good but evil. Look not here, then, for the true dignity of men: look not to yourselves; for in us, “that is, in our flesh,” in the condition which we naturally inherit from our parents, “is no good thing¹.” Even our superiority to the brute creation is continually in danger of being forfeited by the indulgence of worse than brutal appetites and passions. Let us look, then, beyond ourselves for the true dignity of our nature: let us look to Christ, in whom we see the human nature united to the divine, and exalted, above all angelic natures, to the universal dominion on the throne of “the world to come.” This is the true dignity of our nature; and it is *that*, observe, in which we have each a *personal* interest. Christ became a mortal, to give us immortality; he became human, to make us “partakers

¹ Rom. vii. 18.

of the divine nature¹;" he took upon him our flesh, that we might receive of his Spirit; he humbled himself below the angels, that he might make us heirs with himself of "the glory of God." Our true dignity, then, consists in being made by Christ heirs of immortality; redeemed from the death incurred by our first parents; yea, made capable again of holiness on earth, and eternal happiness in heaven. Oh! let us strive to walk worthily of the honour which the Son of God has done to our nature, and, by his Spirit, to become partakers of that dignity and glory which he has placed in our power! Let us remember, that, to be like him in glory hereafter, we must be like him now in holiness; we must cultivate closer communion with Him by penitence and prayer, by faith and obedience; must imitate his blessed example, and especially his great humility. Consider how he humbled himself before he was "crowned with glory and honour;" and "he that humbleth himself," as Christ did, "shall in due time be exalted," as He hath been.

One express reason indeed of our Lord's humiliation was, that he might become thereby not only a propitiation for our sins, but a more complete *pattern to suffering man*, a more perfect guide unto salvation.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they

He could not, otherwise, have left us an example of patience, nor gone before us through suffering unto bliss. We were to be brought unto glory as adopted sons of God; and it pleased God to bring us by his own Son, even by Him, for

¹ 2 Pet. i. 4.

whom, as the Heir of God, all things were designed, and by whom, as the Word of God, all things were made. Since, then, we were to follow in the footsteps of the Son of God, "it became Him" to make himself, as Captain of our Salvation, as our Leader in this blessed cause, "perfect through sufferings." What wonderful condescension of Almighty Love, that "He, for whom and by whom are all things," should consider it a thing becoming him to stoop so low as to share not only our nature, but our sufferings also, and to be made in all things, sin only excepted, like unto his brethren! For "brethren" he is pleased to call us, inasmuch as both He himself who consecrates us to God by cleansing us from our sins, and we who are thus sanctified by Him, are all of one nature; and therefore He is not ashamed, in prophecy, to call us brethren, to identify himself with the Church of God, to speak with us in the language of human sufferers, and to make himself one with the children whom God has given him to be of that family of which He is the first-born. As, then, they were partakers of flesh and blood, "He also himself likewise took part of the same;" and *that* not only,

who are sanctified are all of one : for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels ; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. ver. 10—18.

as we have observed already, that he might be our pattern, but still more that he might be our sacrifice for sin, and through his death “might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.”

For from the Old Testament it is clear, that the Messiah was to come not to save angels or to assume their nature, but to bless “the nations of the earth¹,” according to the promise made to Abraham, and to “take upon him,” as a descendant of that distinguished patriarch, that nature in which he could both suffer for human sins, and feel for human sorrows; to become, in short, a *High-Priest* to whom we might commit our cause with God, in the fullest dependence on his compassion and sympathy.

Many are the practical considerations, my brethren, which crowd upon the mind in contemplating such a subject as the sufferings of the Son of God in his humiliation upon earth as the Son of Man. But we must of necessity confine ourselves to a few; and let them be the three which follow:—For we may consider the sufferings of Christ with reference, in the first place, to what he did for us in his *life* here below; secondly, to what he hath done for us in his *death*; and thirdly, to what he does *now* for us in heaven.

In his *life*, then, here below, our gracious Lord set us an example; and in the sufferings of his holy life he set us more especially *an example of patience*. We cannot keep in mind too strongly, that this world is, of necessity, more or less, a scene of trial and of

¹ Gen. xxii. 18.

trouble; and that suffering upon earth seems to be a necessary preparation for glory in heaven. Our Lord has, as it were, established the precedent by his own experience and example. We are His followers; He is our Guide: and his course lay, as we well know, along the pathway of affliction. If we would accompany Him to glory, we must first learn to tread with him, in faith and patience, the way of suffering. It was thus that the patriarchs in old time inherited the promises¹: it is thus that Christians must now pursue them. “For even hereunto,” saith the Apostle St. Peter, “were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps².” Wherefore “beloved,” to adopt still the language of the same Apostle, “think it not strange concerning the trials (even should they be fiery trials) which are to try you” in this present world, “as though some strange thing happened unto you,” quite contrary to all Christian expectation; “but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy³.”

In the next place, consider the sufferings of Christ in reference to what he hath done for us at his *death*. The Son of God took part, as we have seen, of flesh and blood, in order, by his death, to destroy the great enemy of our souls, and deliver us from the bondage in which, by the fear of death, we were held. It was foretold from the first, that the enemy of mankind should bruise the heel of our Deliverer;

¹ Ch. vi. 12, 13.

² 1 Pet. ii. 21.

³ 1 Pet. iv. 12, &c.

but at the same time it was predicted, that the Seed of the woman should destroy the serpent's head. The prediction was then fulfilled, when Christ suffered upon the cross. By causing the death, for a brief while, of the human nature of our Lord, the devil, (who is "that old serpent") bruised, as it were, the heel of the Seed of the woman. But the bruise proved fatal only to himself: for thereby did our Saviour bruise the serpent's head. By his death he destroyed him who had the power of death. The malice of the arch-enemy recoils upon himself. The very wound which he inflicts, and in inflicting which he seemed for awhile to triumph, proves his own ruin. Oh! the depth of the divine wisdom, and power, and mercy, in converting our very curse into a blessing! Christ makes death itself the remedy of our woes;—*His* death, as the foundation of all our hopes; and *our own* death (unless we be reprobate), as the means of rescuing us from a life of trouble and danger, to admit us into a world of glory. This is the grand and only safe antidote against the fear of death. For death is justly terrible to all but those who look, at once, at death and Christ; regarding Him as dying for them, and themselves as dying in Him. We cannot die in peace, excepting as assured of pardon through the death of Christ: we cannot die in hope, unless we have just ground for supposing that our death will be to us, for Christ's sake, the gate of everlasting salvation.

There remains one other view in which we have to regard the sufferings of Christ, and that is in con-

nexion with what he *now* does for us *in heaven*, as our Intercessor at the right hand of God. He was made like to us in suffering, that we might the more fully rely upon Him in making reconciliation for our sins, and the more readily come to him for succour under different temptations or trials. In condescending to know and feel from experience the evil of suffering, He has given us, as it were, an assurance of his readiness to pity us, and to avert from us, by obtaining the pardon of our sins, those sorrows, the bitterness of which he has tasted himself. Not that, as the Son of God, he could be ignorant of our sufferings even without submitting to them : but it is a proof of his concern for us, a condescension to our doubts and fears, a visible encouragement of our faith, when we see him stooping to take part of our burthen, to feel, as well as know, our sufferings, and bring himself to the very level of our human sorrows. This, though it adds not to his power, nor yet to his knowledge, (both which were infinite already), yet furnishes the proof which we could best appreciate of his tender, we might add (in perfect accordance with St. Paul), of his fraternal sympathy in the distresses of our case. To such an Intercessor go then with perfect confidence : fear not a repulse ; but be assured that he is as willing, as he is able, to sympathize in all our trials, and to enter into all our wants.

Yea, to Christ, my brethren, let us go for compassion and succour, for pardon and deliverance in death, for guidance in the path of patience :—to Him rather than to any created beings, even be they angels of the highest order ; for though our Redeemer did once humble himself, so as to become lower than the

angels, by assuming our mortal nature;—yea, though he became a man of sorrows experimentally acquainted with grief; yet remember that He is now the Supreme Disposer of that kingdom of heaven which is at hand, that “world to come” in which the angels will be our fellow-subjects. We are disciples, in short, of One who is crowned with glory and honour, but who first humbled himself to be a servant, and bore, with unparalleled patience, affliction and death, before he ascended into glory. In humility, through affliction and through death, must we follow his blessed steps, looking to his example, supported by his Spirit, trusting in his dying merits, and encouraged by his never-failing sympathy; that so, after being conformed, for awhile upon earth, “to the image” of his lowliness and patience, we may also be made like unto Him everlastingly in his heavenly glory.

LECTURE II.

Heb. ii. 5—18.

NOTES.

(P. 36.) *Temptation to judaize.*]—See particularly ch. xiii. 8—16.: and see also the Introduction.

(P. 37.) *Of which the Apostles spoke clearly.*]—περι ἧς λαλοῦμεν, ver. 5.

(P. 37.) *A world, or vast society.*]—οἰκουμένη, not αἰών.

(P. 37.) *Celestial polity of which Christians are members.*]—“Our citizenship is in heaven.”—πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς; *Philip.* iii. 20.

(P. 38.) *The world to come*, ver. 5.]—“Which is or was to come,” as explained in the Exposition;—τὴν μέλλουσαν.

(P. 39.) *For the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour*, ver. 9.]—The two clauses are viewed, in the Exposition, as immediately connected; “for” (διὰ τὸ πάθημα) being understood in the sense of “because of” or “in consequence of.” At his death our Lord's glory began: “Now is the Son of man glorified.” *John* xiii. 31.

(P. 42.) *For it became him*, ver. 10.]—i. e. Christ.

(P. 43.) *Are all of one*, ver. 11.]—ἐξ ἑνός, sc. αἵματος, as in *Acts* xviii. 26. See ver. 14.

(P. 43.) *He who consecrates us to God.*]—ὁ ἀγιάζων, ver. 11.

(P. 44.) *Assume their nature.*]—So Chrysostom's explanation of ver. 16. agrees with our version: the expression, he says, (ἐπιλαμβάνεται, “lays hold of”) carries with it the idea of a merciful violence, in seizing upon our nature, when it,

as it were, fled from him, running headlong into ruin, unwilling to be saved, and endeavouring to escape from its best friend.

(P. 44.) *In the fullest dependence upon his compassion.*]—He is a High-Priest who may be confided in; πιστὸς ἀρχιερεὺς.

(P. 45.) *It was foretold from the first.*]—On this prophecy, see Bishop Horsley's Second Sermon on 2 *Pet.* i. 20, 21.

LECTURE III.

MOSES A HUMBLE TYPE AND PRECURSOR OF OUR GREAT APOSTLE, CHRIST JESUS.

HEB. iii. iv.

Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest ; lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. iv. 11.

IN the first two chapters of this most interesting Epistle, Christ Jesus is set before us as the Great "Apostle and High-Priest of our profession," that we may devoutly "consider" Him in these his benign relations to the Church of God, and willingly render to Him that honour, reverence, and adoration, that faith and obedience, to which He is so eminently entitled. Did the time permit, it would be interesting to observe how almost every sacred title which occurs in Scripture has, besides its ordinary use, an emphatic application to our Lord. There have been, for instance, prophets; but Christ is "*that*" distinguished "*Prophet*¹," who was of old expected to come: the Church has been fed by pastors or shepherds; but Christ is her "*Chief Shepherd*²:" she has been ruled by bishops; but Christ is

¹ John vi. 14. and vii. 40.

² Heb. xiii. 20.

pre-eminently the "*Bishop of our Souls*¹." Even the name of Lord or King belongs most properly to Him, who is "*Lord of lords and King of kings*²." But the offices, with which we are at present concerned, are those of Apostle and High-Priest, which are in this Epistle appropriated, in their highest and fullest sense, to our blessed Saviour. Priests, indeed, and high-priests there have been before Christ; but he alone is the everlasting *High-Priest* in the living temple of the Most High. By an *Apostle* we understand one who is sent forth as the publicly authorized and accredited messenger, the envoy, in short, or ambassador of some sovereign prince or power. In this sense St. Paul and the chosen Twelve were Apostles of Christ, as Christ himself was the Great Apostle of the Father. For as he sent them to preach the Gospel, so had the Father sent Him. He is the great "Messenger of the Covenant³," in subordination to whom all other messengers have acted as his ministers.

Christ, then, as the Son of God, sent forth by his Father into our fallen world to preach salvation to it, is the great "*Apostle of our profession*;" of which also, as the Son of man dying for our sins and interceding for us in heaven, He is the *High-Priest*;—uniting with his priesthood the kingly power also, as Lord supreme of "the world to come." He took upon him our flesh to suffer, and yet to rule; to be at once the humblest of men, and the highest of princes.

"Wherefore, holy brethren"—holy, I say, for have you not been "sanctified⁴," or consecrated to God,

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 25.

² Rev. xvii. 14.

³ Mal. iii. 1.

⁴ See ch. ii. 11.

by the blood of the Son of man?—"partakers of the heavenly calling," (that invitation from above to eternal glory which the

iii. 1.

Son of God has given you), consider, I entreat,—yea, with the utmost attention and reverence, "consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus:"—consider, how far superior he is to any previous priest or ambassador of God, not excepting Moses, the great Apostle, as he may be called, of the Law; and how faithfully he hath discharged the offices which He thus undertook. Moses, it is true, was also faithful, and *that* in the discharge of a very extensive commission, having for

its object not one particular service in the Church or House of God, but the re-establishment, formation, and regulation of "all His house."

In this respect he was superior to all the prophets, being the founder, under God, of the Jewish Church: superior to the prophets, but inferior far to Christ, who is, as God, the First Cause of all things, the real Founder of the Jewish Church.

The fidelity of Moses in the discharge of his important commission was still that only of "a servant," and of a servant too sent expressly to supply a testimony, in the mystic types and direct predictions of that elder dispensation, of those things which were to be plainly spoken afterwards by Christ. The Law was subordinate to the Gospel; and Moses was a minister of our Lord, preparing the way for his coming, centuries before he ap-

Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this [man] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his own house. iii. 2—6.

peared. The fidelity of Christ, on the contrary, was that of a Son, not serving in another's, but ruling over his own house, even that house which has been in being, more or less, from the beginning of the world, and which is now built up, under the Gospel, of all kindreds, nations, and languages, to whom "the heavenly calling" has been sent.

Yes, my brethren, His "house are *we*, if," at least, "we hold fast the confidence
 iii. 6 and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." By profession we are members of the Church of Christ; but whether we shall continue such, so as in the final settlement of things at the judgment day to be acknowledged as of the household of faith, will remain to be shown then. Our interest in Christ must be secured by perseverance: they that endure to the end, the same shall be saved. If we would enjoy the everlasting benefits belonging to the Church of Christ, we must be open and resolute in the profession of the Gospel, we must make its hopes our rejoicing and glory, and "hold fast" our religion, through all trials and temptations, "firm unto the end." And in the character of "the High-Priest and Apostle of our profession," have we not every reason for perseverance, which we ought to desire? His greatness and his condescension, his might and his mercy, call alike upon us to "cleave unto Him with full purpose of heart¹." Then consider the awful danger of unbelief, the penalty which it will incur, the forfeiture which it will involve of that rest in "the world to come," upon which Christ himself has entered, and in which he

¹ Acts xii. 23.

will admit us to participate, if we continue in the faith and hope of the Gospel stedfast unto the end.

Great are the prospects held out to us through Christ; and great in proportion the exertions of our spiritual enemies to destroy our hope, by doing all they can to make us afraid, or ashamed, or weary of openly professing and firmly adhering to the Christian faith. Oh! that men should ever be *afraid* to show themselves *His* disciples, to whom the final empire of things in the world to come is put in subjection! or *ashamed* of that Gospel which the Son of God has brought from heaven! or *weary* of pursuing so great a prize as everlasting rest in the mansions of glory! Yet so it was with the Hebrews; and so, alas! it is with ourselves.

The people of God have, indeed, at all times been too forgetful of the rest which the Divine mercy has, under different dispensations, held out to them; too willing to barter it for present gain or pleasure, for ease or honour; too reluctant to encounter those labours, trials, and difficulties, which must first be gone through before we can enter into rest, and which seem necessary, in the appointments of eternal wisdom, to sweeten even the rest of heaven. Observe the warning addressed by the inspired Psalmist to the Church in his own day: how he admonishes the people of Israel not to harden their hearts, as their fathers in the wilderness had done before them, provoking God by their unbelief, and tempting Him

Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, provoked me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. iii. 7—11.

in their presumption; lest what befel their ancestors, should also prove *their* righteous doom from a justly offended God.

This warning addressed by David to his contemporaries, and repeated by St. Paul to the Hebrew converts, is too applicable to Christians of the present day; too applicable, brethren, to ourselves. Our danger may be different in form, but it is in substance the same, which has ever attended the professors of the true religion. Even if we have begun well; even if, in our childhood, we have been carefully instructed by pious parents, or by conscientious pastors diligently directed, in the holy faith to which we were baptized;—or if, at a later period, we have been awakened, by God's grace, out of thoughtless unconcern to a serious sense of the importance of the Gospel; still there is danger, lest, having begun well, we should afterwards fall away from the living God, and, being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, should forfeit all communion with Christ, all participation in the incalculable blessings which the incarnate Son of God has purchased for us by his blood. There is danger, I say, and that on every side. From *without*, the world either assails us with troubles, or allures us with the fatal baits of present prosperity and pleasure: time steps between us and eternity: earth eclipses heaven: in making provision for our bodies, we forget the salvation of our souls: or if we cannot forget, if conscience will not sleep, or if the Holy Spirit in mercy continues to strive with our carnal minds, and to suggest to us saving thoughts, then we procrastinate, putting off the care of eternity from day to day, and never

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. iii. 12.

reflecting that every delay makes our case worse, hardens our hearts more, and is, in fact, a melancholy deception practised upon ourselves, as if we had an interest in our own destruction! Oh! the deceitfulness of sin! and the deceitfulness too of our own hearts! For there, in fact, lies the root of the evil. Dangers from without would avail but little, if there were not also danger from *within*. It is the "evil heart of unbelief," which causes us to apostatize from God. If we, really, in our hearts, believed the solemn truths which, with our mouths, we continually profess, the world and its delusions would prove comparatively powerless, the shafts of profane ridicule would fall despised at our feet, yea "the fiery darts" of temptation would recoil without effect, and the enemy of souls himself would flee from us disappointed and abashed.

Let us go, then, to the root of the evil;—to the fountain, whence the bitter waters take their rise; to the heart, where unbelief begins. Observe the Apostle's words: "Take heed lest there be in any of you an *evil heart* of unbelief;" and again, "Lest any of you be *hardened* through the deceitfulness of sin." This is the real history of infidelity, the true account of its origin;—*the heart hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*, so as to prefer evil to good, darkness to light, error to the truth. When men by indulgence become wedded to sin, they become also, as a matter of course, disinclined to the faith of Him who came into the world to *destroy* sin. The heart devoted to sensual indulgence, to covetousness, to vain glory, to ambition, to *any* sin, in short, or worldliness of life, (open or more concealed, refined or coarse,) recoils with dislike and aversion from the heavenly promises

and holy precepts of the Gospel. True it is, the unbeliever contrives, before men, to cloke over his irreligion with specious appearances. He rakes together minute objections against the Gospel from the obscurer parts of Christian history; or he declaims against mysteries, as if religion could possibly be otherwise than mysterious: he dives into the Deluge, or loses himself in Creation, in the hope of meeting with some difficulty or other, which shall furnish an excuse for his unbelief. If, after all, he can meet with no objections, or only those which have been a thousand times refuted, he invents them for himself, bolstering up his case with exaggerated misrepresentations, with unfounded calumnies, with puerile mistakes, with inconclusive reasonings. And then, forsooth, he puts forth the plea of conscience! he proclaims himself a martyr! and would have men regard him as a self-devoted victim in the war of extermination—against what?—against the peace and happiness of social life, against piety and virtue, against the best hopes of mankind! Such are the outward pretensions of the more daring unbeliever; and by such shallow pretensions are the simple too often overborne and deceived. But God is not thus mocked: He who knows what is in man, has told us where to look for the real origin of unbelief, even in “an evil heart,” in a heart hardened by sinful indulgence. It is bad men only who will reject the Christian faith. Hence it is that repentance and faith are always to be preached together, as they originally were by the Apostles of Christ¹. Men must

¹ “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,” *Acts* xx. 21.

be ready to forsake their sins, if they would truly embrace the Gospel. It is not want of evidence, but want of inclination—it is not the love of truth, but the *love of sin*, that causes Christianity to be rejected.

If then the heart, when hardened, falls away, by a moral necessity, into unbelief; and if this hardening of the heart is occasioned by “the deceitfulness of sin,” beguiling us day after day to neglect and procrastinate our salvation—yea to indulge our corrupt propensities, until our habits of sin become so fixed, as to be almost incurable; can we be too serious, too earnest, or too early, in applying to ourselves the exhortation, not to remain exposed a moment longer to this dangerous preparation for unbelief, this gradual hardening of the heart through a love of sin? Oh! no. Delay not the work even till to-morrow: but this day, and each succeeding day, while it is called *To-day*, and without trusting to any morrow, call seriously to mind the exhortation of the sacred writer, and keep your heart with all diligence from the hardening tendency of sinful indulgence. Our fruition hereafter of Christ’s glory depends on our perseverance now in his faith: “for we have been made partakers of Christ,” as heirs of his kingdom, “if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast to the end,” through all the perils of this “day,” this short though trying day, of our earthly probation.

But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; while it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. iii. 13—15.

Consider how the Israelites failed of the rest pro-

mised to them. They all commenced with Moses, and by means of the miracles which he wrought, the journey to Canaan: they were all baptized, as it were, to the privileges of that dispensation "in the cloud and in the sea." But how few of them entered the promised land! only two, in fact, of that numerous host which came forth from Egypt! During forty years did they provoke God in the wilderness by their hardness of heart and want of faith, until that generation died away, excluded by the Almighty from the promised rest, and denounced as incapable of entering in because of their unbelief.

In the case of the Israelites we Christians behold a picture of our own condition, and should derive from it a solemn warning. "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into
iv. 1. His rest, any of you should seem," at last, "to" have "come short of it." For as to the Israelites was promised the land of Canaan, in which they should rest after their journey through the wilderness, and of this land "good tidings" were brought before they came to it; so to us is made the

For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we

promise of a far "better country", that is, an heavenly"—a country, of which the most glorious tidings have been brought to us in the Gospel. But the Israelites, through

¹ Heb. xi. 16.

unbelief, failed of their rest; and we in like manner may fail of our's. Whilst then we rejoice in the hope of the Gospel, it must be with fear, lest we fall from our stedfastness, seeing that the "good tidings" preached to us will not avail to our salvation, if they be not mixed with faith in those that receive them. To them who believe a rest is promised, even that rest of God, which has from the first been intimated in the Scriptures, and especially in the ninety-fifth Psalm, to which we have already referred.

For the rest or sabbath there spoken of is clearly some *future* rest, from which the unbelieving were to be excluded;—not the first of all Sabbaths, when God rested from his works; (which was past long before the time to which the Psalm refers;) nor *that* which mankind observed in remembrance of God's resting from his works; for that Sabbath had already been restored to the Israelites in the wilderness, and was enjoyed even by the unbelieving part of them: nor again by the rest spoken of by the Psalmist are we to understand, as principally intended, the rest of Canaan; for of that the generation, to whom it was promised, fell short through unbelief. But surely this was not to be the case with the great Sabbath which God had provided for his people? Where would be the rest, if it were never to be realized. Where the promise, if none were to inherit it? Observe again, that between

which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief. iv. 2—6.

Again he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is

said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus [that is, Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. iv. 7, 8.

Joshua and David intervened a period of four hundred years: yet David still continues to speak of a *rest to come*, which he admonishes his countrymen, the people of his own day, not to forfeit by unbelief.

Clearly this rest was not what Joshua had accomplished for Israel; and which, on his death, was again disturbed by wars, and continued in fact to be so disturbed more or less for centuries, until at length the land itself was forfeited, and the people carried into captivity. Joshua, in short, like Moses, was, herein, but a forerunner of Christ;—a type of the Captain of our salvation; and the rest which he achieved for the people of God was but a shadow of the rest principally intended from the very first, and preached in the wilderness under this figure of an earthly conquest.

What then is our conclusion? What but that to which the Apostle has come? namely, that besides God's rest from Creation, besides our own weekly sabbath, besides the peaceable enjoyment by the Israelites of the conquered land of Canaan, "there remaineth still a rest" for all the people of God of ancient or of modern times, Jews or Gentiles; even the keeping of an eternal Sabbath¹ in that heavenly country, to which from of old the hopes of the faithful have been principally directed. Yes, there is still a rest remaining—a rest from the new Creation, as well as from the old; the rest of the Lord our Redeemer, as well as of the Lord our Maker; an everlasting Sab-

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. iv. 9.

¹ See the marginal translation in the authorized version.

bath besides our present temporal one ; a rest promised to the Christian, when he shall have passed through this earthly wilderness, no less than to the Israelite after his journeyings through the deserts of Arabia ; a rest in the world to come, as well as in that which now is.

And here let us pause to contrast our present state of being with that to which we look forward in the world to come, illustrated as it is by the notion of a Sabbath or *rest from labour*. “ For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased
iv. 10.
from his own works, as God did from
his.” Our present life, at best, is more or less a life of labour and sorrow. It was part of the primeval curse, that we should eat bread in the sweat of our brow. The denunciation, if not verified literally, is realized in some other way. Those who are conscientious, though they may differ one from another in their separate callings, still in their vocations will labour. Even if men endeavour to avoid their duty, and give themselves up to indolence, then idleness itself becomes a burthen, and they labour with mere vacuity. But we speak now of faithful Christians ; and we speak, therefore, of the industrious. True it is, industry has its satisfactions, which abundantly compensate for its labours ; and in the world to come, no doubt, the redeemed spirits made perfect will be active, infinitely more active than we can be in our present animal bodies. But there will be this difference : at present, exertion is often irksome to us, always, if continued, productive of fatigue, and as such well denominated *labour* ; but in the next state of being, we believe that toil will have ceased, and that there will be the

utmost freedom of exertion without any sensations of pain or weariness, *the most perfect activity combined with the most perfect rest.*

But if we are to rest from the *works of toil*, and to repose, if we may so speak, in the most unconstrained enjoyment of perfect energy, how much more shall we rest from trouble, or from the *works of patience*? Men labour now with troubles many and grievous, with loss of property, with loss of health, with loss of friends, with want and care and oppression;—yea and who shall number half the sorrows that flesh is heir to? With these men labour now; and one great part of the business of our life is to “let patience have her perfect *work*,” the better to prepare us for our future *rest*. For in heaven will be no sorrow; no more work for patience to perform. The Christian will then rest from all his trouble, as well as from all his toil.

There is another kind of labour to which we may advert,—that which is required in the *work of our salvation*. We are solemnly exhorted in Scripture¹ to work out our salvation with fear and trembling;—an exhortation, which implies that it is not only a laborious work, but one of much uncertainty; one which requires continual vigilance and caution against the risk of failure. “With fear and trembling” must we labour in this most important of all works. For although it is God himself “who works in us both to will and to do;” (which is indeed the great inducement to our working at all;) yet does he not thereby set aside our rational responsibility, or free agency, as moral creatures. We are still exposed to the danger

¹ Phil. ii. 12, 13.

of being lost. Who would not gladly rest from a work where there is so much to fear, and where the consequences of failure would be so dreadful? Who would not hail with joy unspeakable the safe conclusion of labours so awfully important? Then consider, even if we ultimately prove successful, the present troubles and difficulties to be encountered in struggling against sin. Who ever seriously engaged in this work, that did not mourn the obstacles he had to encounter from temptations without and corruptions within, an evil world, and, what is worse, a heart naturally disposed to evil, from which that world derives in fact its chief power to destroy? In the world to come we hope to delight in every thing that is good, and to serve God not so much from a sense of duty, as from a feeling of unutterable enjoyment in his service. We shall then have no corruptions to contend with, no frailties to paralyze our exertions. But how far is this from being the case now! and how blessed a transition must that be, to exchange weakness for strength, corruption for purity; to find holiness no longer a task, no longer a toil, no longer a labour, but our joy and delight, in which our souls may rest for ever in full complacency!

Truly, then, there is "a rest for the people of God"—a rest from toil, a rest from trouble, and, above all, a rest from the anxious labour of contending against sin: and "blessed," therefore, "are the dead, who die in the Lord Jesus: Even so, saith the Spirit; for they *rest* from their labours, and their works do follow them." Their works follow them, not indeed to be resumed in that happy world, but to be for Christ's sake graciously rewarded, and to act as a

foil to enhance their future felicity. Rest is rendered sweet by previous labour. The everlasting rest in glory of the people of God will be the happier, doubtless, for the labours of their earthly probation.

To that blessed rest, my brethren, let us all endeavour continually with all diligence to attain. And lest we should fail of it, let us meet the danger in its

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest; lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. iv. 11—13.

first risings, by guarding against the *evil heart* of unbelief which has ever been the great cause of apostasy from God. Seek not vain excuses and apologies for worldly-mindedness, which men who see not the heart may be obliged, in mutual courtesy or in charity, to admit: but remember in this matter with whom we have to do, and to whom we have to render our account;—One, whose searching word¹, by which we are to be judged², “is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing” far

beyond our words and actions, even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, yea,” as it were, “of the joints and marrow” of the inner man; being “a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” This is the Judge with whom we have to do in all questions of religion: One, from whom concealment

¹ “The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Eph. vi. 17.

² John xii. 48.

is impossible ; to whom every creature is manifest ; and to whose eyes all things, even the self-deceiving heart of man, is naked and open. Away then with every idle subterfuge ; and, with humble and believing hearts, let us implicitly receive the Gospel preached to us by the Son of God, the Great Apostle of our profession ; and thankfully embrace the salvation, which, as the Son of Man and our High-Priest with God, he hath procured for us. If in doing this we meet with labours and trials, yet is it only for a time, a comparatively short time ; and then cometh a rest, a heavenly, glorious, and everlasting rest for the people of God.

Let us remember too, that, if our difficulties are great, so also are the sympathy and help on which we are encouraged to depend. Our great Apostle being also our “great High-Priest,” is fully able to advocate our cause, and to “send us help from his holy place,” even from that heaven into which he is passed, and where he is now exalted, as the Saviour of men and as the Son of God, to the right hand of the Majesty on High. Surely such a High-Priest is fully able to succour us ; and not more able to succour, than He is ready to feel for our infirmities, as having himself been in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. When, therefore, our trials increase upon us, and our hearts begin to fail, let us think of the Great Captain of our Salvation, our

Seeing then that we have a great High-Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High-Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. iv. 14—16.

Apostle, Prince, and Leader, who trod the wilderness before us ; and fully relying both on his merits and his sympathy, let us freely pour out our hearts in prayer before “the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace for seasonable help” in time even of our greatest need, until our day of labour is brought to a close, and our rest in eternity secured.

LECTURE III.

Heb. iii. iv.

NOTES.

(P. 53.) *First Cause of all things.*]—Ver. 4, (ch. iii.) affords a strong argument in proof of our Lord's divinity.

(P. 54.) *If we be open and resolute.*]—ἐάνπαι τὴν παρρησίαν κ. τ. λ. iii. 6.

(P. 56.) *Fall away from the living God.*]—ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος, iii. 12. The reference may be more especially to Christ, the Son of God, who ever liveth himself to give life to his followers ;—living and life-giving. “For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself :” (*John* v. 26.) “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (1 *John* v. 11.)

(P. 59.) *Partakers of Christ*, iii. 14.]—i. e. prospectively as heirs with him (*Rom.* viii. 17.) on condition of persevering in the faith, “if we hold fast,” &c.:—“partakers of Christ” (μέτοχοι), as he partook (μετέσχε “took part”) of our flesh and blood (ii. 14.);—partakers, finally, of his heavenly kingdom, as we are, already, “of the heavenly calling,” (iii. 1.)

(P. 60.) *By means of the miracles which he wrought.*]—διὰ Μωϋσέως, ver. 16.

(P. 60.) *To have come short of it.*]—ὑστερηκέναι, iv. 1.

(P. 60.) *For unto us was the Gospel preached*, iv. 2.]—Rather “has the Gospel been preached,” or “we also have been favoured with good tidings ;” ἐσμὲν εὐηγγελισμένοι, iv. 2.

(P. 61.) *The “good tidings” preached.*]—Ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς : the report which they heard from the twelve spies, (*Numb.* xiii. 26, 27.) who were types of the twelve Apostles ; as their tidings were of the Gospel, and Canaan of the “heavenly country.” Ch. xi. 16.

(P. 62.) *The rest principally intended from the very first.*]—
See particularly ver. 6. ch. iv.

(P. 63.) *For he that is entered*, ver. 10.]—More properly, perhaps, “He that enters,” &c. “ceases;” it being a *general* remark; a use often made of the aorist: see note on *Rom.* viii. 29, 30. in the “Exposition” of that Epistle.

(P. 64.) *Perfect activity combined with perfect rest.*]—

“They come and go at thy behest,
No will, but thine, O God, have they;
Such happy work is sweetest rest;
No slumber needs such blissful day;
Those gracious errands cannot tire,
Though through vast fields of air they lie;
Their love by proof doth not expire,
But brightens everlastingly.”

Rickard's “Hymns for Private Devotion.”

(P. 66.) *Let us endeavour with all diligence.*]—σπουδάσωμεν.

(P. 66.) *To whom we have to render our account.*]—Πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, iv. 3. ἀντὶ τοῦ, Αὐτῷ μέλλομεν δοῦναι ἐκθύνας τῶν πεπραγμένων. *Chrysost.*

(P. 66.) *Soul and spirit*, iv. 12.]—Observe the distinction, which may be found also 1 *Thess.* v. 23. Thus distinguished, the soul seems to be the seat of the lower affections connected with our life in the flesh, and which will cease, (to those at least who shall be saved eternally,) when that life is over: the spirit is the seat of the higher affections and powers, in which we most resemble the Deity, such as *love, wisdom, &c.* See 1 *Cor.* xv. 45. “The first man Adam was made a living *soul*; the last Adam a quickening *Spirit*,” from which passage it should seem that our spirits are the gift of redemption, not of our *first* creation: “first, the natural (or animal, τὸ ψυχικόν); afterward the spiritual (τὸ πνευματικόν). This is no *new* opinion. Bishop Taylor, for instance, held it; and, I believe, Bishop Horsley.

(P. 68.) *Freely pour out our hearts in prayer before “the throne of grace.”*]—προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρήσιας, iv. 16.

(P. 68.) *Seasonable help.*]—ἐγκαίρον βοήθειαν, *ibid.*

LECTURE IV.

CHRIST, AS OUR HIGH-PRIEST WITH GOD, THE
AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION.

HEB. v. 1—10.

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high-priest, after the order of Melchisedec. v. 9, 10.

IN the preceding chapters of this Epistle frequent mention¹ has been made of the high-priesthood of our Lord. But that office being so important, St. Paul did not think it enough merely to advert to it in passing, particularly when writing to Jewish converts, in whose eyes the priestly office occupied, naturally and necessarily, a very prominent position. It was, in truth, the cardinal feature of the Jewish religion; as it is also of the Christian. Accordingly, the subject of our Lord's priesthood is formally discussed by the inspired penman, and occupies a large proportion² of his letter. In the chapter before us,

¹ See ch. ii. 17. iii. 1. iv. 14, 15.

² Viz. ch. v. 1—10. and from ch. vii. 1. to ch. x. 29. besides ch. ii. 5—18.

or at least in that part of it (comprising the first ten verses) which we have at present to consider, a *general view* is taken of the high-priesthood of Christ in reference to the *leading features* of that office as exhibited under the Law.

This, my brethren, is the subject proposed for our present consideration;—a most interesting, and (as, I trust, will be seen before we conclude) a most edifying subject, to which to invite the attention of a Christian congregation. May it prove, by God's blessing, a profitable one to us !

From the abolition, by the Gospel, of the ritual institutions of the Mosaic Law, the Jews might not unnaturally suppose that Christianity had either no priesthood, or at least none worthy of being compared with that which formed so striking a part of the elder dispensation. But this was a very erroneous view of the Gospel. Christ, as we have repeatedly asserted, is the High-Priest of our profession. And now let us observe the reasons for which this title is applied to our Redeemer.

In the first place, the office of High-priest under the Mosaic dispensation was a *vicarious* office in sacred things. He was ordained *for or on behalf of* men in their religious services, in the "things pertaining to God." He stood as the appointed *mediator* between men and the Almighty. Through him even their "gifts" were to be offered, and still more their "sacrifices for sins." He was the great negotiator, as it were, of acceptance and atonement.

In the high-priest it was further necessary, that he

For every high-priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. v. 1.

should be able *to feel for* those, on whose behalf he exercised his office, making all reasonable and moderate allowance for the ignorant and erring. This any high-priest taken from among mere men was peculiarly inclined, or at least naturally fitted to do, being himself also compassed with human infirmity: and, indeed, on

Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and [on them that are] out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. ver. 2, 3.

this ground he was called upon not only to sympathize with those who in ignorance were out of the way, and offer sacrifices for them, but to offer for his own sins also; which, so far, disqualified him from being a “perfect” high-priest, or any thing more than a humble type or figure of the great High-Priest to come, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Another qualification requisite as to the office of high-priest, was that he should not arrogantly take upon himself this high honour, but be “*called of God*,” as was Aaron,” and as were also, by

And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. ver. 4.

a perpetual law¹, his descendants after him. You remember well “the gainsaying of Corah;” how he, being indeed of the tribe of Levi, but not of the family of Aaron, was not content with an inferior station in the ministry of the tabernacle, but aspired to “the priesthood also;” murmuring against Aaron, as if he had taken this honour to himself on the ground of being more holy than his brethren, and had not been expressly “chosen to come near unto the Lord³” on

¹ Exod. xxviii. 1. 43. Numb. xviii. 1.

² Numb. xvi. 10.

³ Numb. xvi. 5.

behalf of the rest of Israel. You remember, I say, the presumptuous ambition of Corah, and you know his punishment; how he perished in his gainsaying against Aaron, or rather against the Lord¹; the earth itself opening to swallow up the rebels who joined him, whilst Corah and his company of two hundred and fifty (the more immediate abettors of his pride) were consumed with fire, as they stood offering their unhallowed incense in their self-arrogated office. So awfully did God declare, by these terrible judgments, that the office of high-priest was no human ordinance, but one of divine institution, which no man could take upon himself with impunity, but which he only was to bear, who, either expressly in person or virtually by some general appointment, was called of God.

Such was the high-priest, when taken from among men. Now apply these qualifications to the priesthood of Christ; in whom this, as well as the other prophetic types of the Law, was so wonderfully fulfilled.

In the first place, he was *called of God*. He glorified not himself to be made an High-Priest, or to undertake any of his great offices as the Saviour of the

So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High-Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son; to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. v. 5, 6.

world, without a divine commission, but came in his Father's name², and accordingly "received from God the Father honour and glory" in various ways, but especially when at his baptism, as also on other occasions, "there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased³."

¹ Numb. xvi. 11.

² John v. 43.

³ 2 Pet. 1. 17.

Thus did God bear direct testimony to the commission of Christ, and call him expressly by a voice from heaven to the exercise of his ministry; even as it had been prophesied of him long before in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee:" whilst, with more immediate reference to his sacerdotal office, it is said in another Psalm, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec¹."

In the second place, our High-Priest—though not taken from among men, as was Aaron, was yet, by virtue of his incarnation, "perfect man;" as He is, by eternal generation from the Father, "perfect God:" and, as man, in the truth of our nature, he can fully *feel compassion* for "his brethren," and is even ready to make every reasonable allowance for human infirmity. Listen to Him on the cross interceding for his very murderers, extenuating their offences to the utmost, yea, pitying them as persons "ignorant and out of the way:"—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He who, though without sin, could thus compassionate sinners, how much more will he pity those that suffer, when he has been so eminent a sufferer himself! For real, without doubt, and most grievous, must those sufferings have been, which wrung from the Son of God, in the days of his flesh, "prayers and supplications" for deliverance, (as, for instance, during his agony in the garden, and subsequently on the cross itself,) "with

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. ver. 7, 8.

¹ Ps. cx. 4.

strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death." True he "was heard in that he feared;" he was delivered, for his unparalleled piety, from the great object of his human apprehensions¹; yea, as "the Seed of the woman," he triumphed most gloriously at his resurrection over him that had the power of death, but not without such previous suffering as the world never witnessed before nor since. "For though he was Son of God, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered:" obedience even "unto death²;" submission, under the severest agonies, to his heavenly Father's will³.

But this leads us to observe the third qualification required in a high-priest, and which we shall perceive to have been found in Christ; and indeed only in Him, in that perfection which was necessary to the eternal salvation of sinners. I allude to the fitness of Christ

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an High-Priest after the order of Melchisedec.
ver. 9, 10.

to be a *Mediator* "for men in things pertaining to God;" to be, in short, as he is called by St. John, our "advocate with the Father," and "the propitiation also for our sins⁴." The priests of the Jews, even their high-priests, being themselves "compassed with infirmity," could not offer any real atonement, excepting for ceremonial pollutions. Needing expiation themselves, how could they expiate the sins of others? unless in so far as, by the typical sacrifices of the law, they led themselves and their fellow-sinners to rely on the Great Sacrifice, which was to be accom-

¹ Comp. *Ps.* xxxiv. 4. "I sought the Lord, and he *heard* me, and *delivered* me from all *my fears*."

² *Philip.* ii. 8.

³ *Matt.* xxvi. 39.

⁴ *1 John* ii. 1, 2.

plished in the fulness of time. But Christ had no sin, nor any infirmity of his own, for which to seek atonement. His obedience was altogether without flaw or blemish, and complete also in all the parts of human virtue. He confined not himself to the easier or more applauded parts of goodness, to deeds of benevolence, or to habits of active obedience; but descended with our suffering race into the valley of weeping, and there learnt, in the path of affliction, the less ostentatious, but more difficult lesson of passive virtue. Let us not be surprised to hear that even Christ himself, as man, gradually "*learnt* obedience." We know that he took upon him our nature in all its sinless peculiarities, one of which is to attain by degrees to virtue; that He was really and truly man, and as such "grew in wisdom" as he grew "in stature," advancing continually to higher excellence, until his obedience became, in all its parts and all its degrees, complete and perfect. The last step in this holy career was accomplished during the scene of his final sufferings, and *that*, if we may so speak, not without a struggle, nor without an effort, not without some reluctance to meet the dreadful trial which awaited Him, and especially to bear the withdrawing, though but for a short space, of the light of his Father's countenance. What else could that "exceeding sorrow" mean, which his soul experienced in the "agony of the garden," even "unto death?" or "his sweat, which was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground?" or the prayer which he thrice repeated, that, if it were possible, the bitter cup might pass from him? Surely this was an arduous struggle, an agonizing conflict, in the severest discipline that patience ever underwent?

But the struggle was effectual, and patience had its perfect work. Amid these mysterious sufferings, infinitely beyond, perhaps, what we can even comprehend, the lesson of obedience was fully learnt, even to the undergoing of death, yea, and that the death of the cross, when not man only, but God himself appeared to “forsake” the sufferer. The thrice repeated prayer for deliverance still ended in the same words;—“nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” Thus did “Christ the righteous,”—by suffering perfect his obedience to the divine “will:” and thus was he in all respects made perfect as our High-Priest;—a perfect *example* of patience, as well as of all other excellence, a perfect *sacrifice* for sin, a perfect *intercessor* for human misery; “and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him; called of God an High-Priest,” not after the *imperfect* and temporary order of Aaron, but after an order of far higher rank, typified, long before the time of Aaron, in the person of that ancient priest and king, Melchisedec.

The further consideration of this order of Melchisedec we must, as the Apostle indeed has done, for awhile defer; and resting here in our exposition, let us consider some of the practical uses to be made of the passage of Scripture, to which our attention has been now directed.

We have noticed *three* circumstances in the priesthood of Christ, from each of which, successively, we may derive instruction; as also, in conclusion, from regarding our Lord in the whole of his priestly office, as the *Author of eternal Salvation*.

In the *first* place, Christ was called of God to be a

High-Priest;—called, as we have seen, both by miracles and by prophecy, and expressly by a Voice from Heaven. He did not glorify himself by assuming the office of his own accord. Though the Son of God, he conformed herein to the practice observed as to the Jewish priesthood, and to the rule indeed generally laid down in Scripture, as to “things pertaining to God,” that “no man taketh such honour to himself, but he that is called of God.” Would that among Christians, the professed followers of the Son of God, the same humble temper prevailed, the same absence of all spiritual arrogance or ambition! Men would not then, without adequate authority, sacrilegiously thrust themselves into what are justly styled “sacred callings,” and which cannot safely be assumed by a mere human authority, unaccompanied by a warrant from above. True it is we have no priesthood strictly so called; none, I mean, like that of the Jews. The Christian ministry differs in many respects from the priesthood of Aaron; and infinitely inferior is it to that of Christ. Still the Christian ministry is a *sacred* office: it is a ministry in “things pertaining to God:” it is a ministry, the express object of which is to apply the benefits of the priesthood of Christ for the reconciliation of man to God; and, as such, it is a ministry directly authorized, at its first establishment, by our Lord himself, and from Him derived to us, through the Apostles and other Christian Bishops, who succeeded them in the government of the Church, down even to the present day. I enter not now into the arguments, to my mind abundant and irrefragable, in support of this view of the subject. Such an inquiry would far exceed our present limits, and be

beside our present purpose. From the Scripture, however, now before us, any humble and sober-minded Christian would be induced, one might suppose, to shrink from the presumption of intruding himself uncalled into a sacred office, or of obeying any other call than that which God by his word has sanctioned, and by his providence preserved, in the kingdom of his Son. The example of Christ condemns emphatically the arrogance of those who would, without a lawful commission, assume to themselves the honour of being God's ministers for men.

In the *second* place, we have such an High-Priest as *can compassionate sinners, and sympathize with those that suffer*. What encouragement doth this truth afford to the penitent ! What consolation to the afflicted !

What encouragement, I say, to the penitent ! Christ has compassion upon sinners : He pitied even those that crucified him ; and when afterwards many of *them*, at the preaching of St. Peter, repented and believed the Gospel, they were immediately received into the Church. Our Lord's prayer for them was answered : they were "forgiven¹." Let us then, like them, repent and believe in Christ : no longer let any one, through ignorance of his own good or of the divine mercy, be "alienated from the life of God," and wander in sin and misery, as one astray who has lost the way of peace ; but let us hasten in penitence to our Advocate with the Father, that through him, notwithstanding the number and the magnitude of our past transgressions, we may find both acceptance and assistance for the time to come.

¹ See Acts ii. 38.

What encouragement then, in the compassion of Christ, do we find to the penitent! and what consolation, as we observed, to the sons and daughters of affliction! He who suffered so much himself when on earth, He who prayed that, if possible, “the cup” might pass from him, yet bowed in submission to his Father’s will, will He not interest himself, my brethren, in *your* sufferings? Will He not allow for the reluctance *you* feel to drink of the cup of sorrow, and assist you to submit implicitly, as He did, to the divine will, that you may follow *on* in his holy steps, through tribulation unto glory?

From the compassion of Christ, his pity for sinners, his sympathy with the afflicted—we too, my friends, should learn to show the like compassion. The lesson is more especially addressed to the ministers of Christ; still it is addressed to all. Let us learn, then, from our Lord, to have pity even on sinners; not to exaggerate, but, as far as may be, to extenuate their wickedness; and to seek forgiveness of it both from God and man. Especially let us remember to be ourselves forgiving, and not only forgiving, but feelingly considerate towards “the ignorant,” “and those who are out of the way.” Of these there are a large proportion in every Christian country. Among ourselves¹ in particular, we have, indeed, many ignorant, and, in consequence, wandering out of the way. Let us feel for their ignorance, and gladly contribute, by promoting their instruction, to bring them into “the way” of truth, of holiness, and of peace.

In the *third* place, the priesthood of Christ is a

¹ *i. e.* In Antigua.

vicarious or *mediatorial* office, ordained on behalf of men in things pertaining to God. There is no access to the Father but by the Son. We cannot accomplish our salvation excepting through Him. It is our High-Priest who offers, or rather who has offered once for all, upon the cross, a sacrifice for our sins; it is our High-Priest also who offers up our "gifts" to God, and procures their acceptance; whether they be our prayers, our alms, our patience, our tears of penitence, our sacramental observances, our labours in our separate vocations, or whatever other services we render unto God, it is through Christ that we must look for their acceptance: it is He who must offer them to the Father, if we would have them remembered before God. He is our Surety, our Advocate, the Head of the body, our Representative with God in heaven.

Christ is, in short, the mediator between God and man. It is most important ever to remember this; and moreover to keep in mind that He is our *only* Mediator, our only High-Priest, and that no other being stands in this vicarious relation to us, as capable in any way of working out our salvation for us in our stead. There are those, I believe, in the Christian world, (and perhaps their number is not small,) who attach something of a vicarious character to the ministers of religion. The error is indeed, properly speaking, one of the Papal Church: still it exists even among Protestants. It is an error, I say, and one of very dangerous tendency. It arises, possibly, from a misconception of the term "priest" as applied to the ministers of Christ. For although the term is in truth justly applied, so far as it denotes a public minister in sacred things; yet, as applied to Christian ministers,

it has not that extent of meaning in which it is used of Christ himself. It does not imply, for instance, the doing of any thing *in the stead* of another, as Christ suffered in our stead. Yet this is the notion which some appear to entertain of the Christian minister; to whom they delegate in a manner, as to a kind of deputy in sacred things, the performance of their religious duties. For are there not those, who think that piety is necessary in a *priest*, but may be dispensed with in *laymen*? (as if *his* piety would be placed to *their* account;)—that *he* ought to pray, but that *they* need not join with him; that *he* must administer the Supper of the Lord, of which, however, *they* need not partake; and that *he* is to preach the Gospel, whilst *they* are under no necessity of attending to it? In words, perhaps, no one would acknowledge such a view of the Christian priesthood; but in effect it seems to prevail, I fear, rather widely. Else why, as we have just noticed, do Christians, with so little fear, or rather with so much self-satisfaction, hear sermons without minding them? attend at prayers, but never join in them? see the table of the Lord spread, yet continually turn their backs upon it? or call upon the clergy to be heavenly-minded, whilst they devote themselves, heart and soul, to the service of the world? We are ministers for you, brethren, not mediators;—ordained not to serve God in your stead, as your deputies, but to assist in affording you the means, especially the public means, opportunities, and instruction necessary for serving God *yourselves*. The clergy *lead* the prayers, that all may *join* in them; they *administer* the Sacraments, that all may *partake* in them; they *preach* the truth, that all may *obey* it; and would to God, my

brethren, I could add, that we did also *set before you* such an example, as all might *follow* ! In this way, the ministers of Christ may be, and ought to be, instrumental to your salvation ; but not as working it out for you : no ! that work must be done by yourselves, through Christ alone, as the sole Mediator between God and man.

Finally, we have to consider Christ our High-Priest, called of God, full of compassion for man, and appearing in heaven for us with sacrifice and intercession, as being, in this his priestly office, *the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him*. It is most important to observe this connexion between Christ the High-Priest and Christ the Saviour of men. “ Being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him, called of God an High-Priest.” Those who reject the priesthood of our Lord, his sacrifice and intercession, virtually reject his salvation. It is for this reason, no doubt, among others, that St. Paul has, in this Epistle, insisted so much upon the sacerdotal office of our Redeemer ; and for the same reason also must we allow that office a prominent place continually before the eye of our faith.

Christ, then, an High-Priest, is our Saviour ; Christ—and he *alone*. To the office of Saviour-Priest He only has been called of God. In vain shall we look for salvation in any other. Christ only is its author.

The salvation thus procured for us by Christ is offered to *all* ; but offered *on certain terms*, with which, if we refuse to comply, we shall of necessity forfeit the salvation. The terms are in one word “ obedience ;” —obedience to his rule as King, who as Priest is our

Saviour. The offices of Christ are distinct, but inseparable. We must receive Him in each and in all of them. As Priest, he is the object of our faith; as King, of our obedience: and in the former office He is the author of eternal salvation to those who receive Him in the latter. Seek not, then, to separate faith from obedience, or obedience from faith. You may distinguish them in contemplation; but in practice they must ever be united. It is said in Scripture, that we are saved by faith; but it is also said, that Christ is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey him. The fact is, that genuine faith and genuine obedience are only different views, or at least only different parts, of the same thing. One is the principle; the other its effect: one the tree; the other the fruit. Hence it is that in holy writ they are almost always identified; and that the great object of Christian preaching is asserted to be, to produce in all the world “the obedience of faith¹.”

This, my brethren, was St. Paul's object as an Apostle of Christ. For this he preached; and for this he wrote. This must still be the object of the Christian minister; this the great end of all our labours,—faith resulting in obedience, and obedience flowing from faith; faith in Christ your High-Priest, obedience to Christ your King. To *all*, on these terms, salvation, eternal salvation, is offered. None are excluded, except by want of faith or want of obedience. Jews and Gentiles, wise and simple, learned and unlearned, high and low, rich and poor, the high-born and the humble, the free and the slave, are alike received by

¹ Rom. i. 5. Marg. Trans.

the Son of God; and to all is this royal High-Priest, this Sacerdotal Prince of righteousness and peace, the author of everlasting salvation, if only you believe and obey him; trusting in him as your atoning intercessor with God, and serving him truly, both in soul and body, as one who hath both a sovereign right to demand your obedience and sovereign power to reward it.

LECTURE IV.

Heb. v. 1—10.

NOTES.

(P. 72.) *The reasons for which.*]—πᾶς γάρ. ver. 1.

(P. 72.) *For, or on behalf of.*]—ὑπὲρ. ver. 1.

(P. 73.) *Making all reasonable and moderate allowance.*]—μετριοπαθεῖν. ver. 2.

(P. 73.) *Those who, in their ignorance, were out of the way.*]—τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσι καὶ πλανωμένοις. ver. 2 : both epithets descriptive of the same persons.

(P. 75.) *Thou art my Son, &c.* ver. 5.]—Relates principally to the resurrection of our Lord, and thence to his priesthood, consequent thereupon.

(P. 76.) *Was heard in that he feared,* ver. 7.]—i. e. was heard so as to be delivered from his fear or apprehension (ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας). This is, probably, the correct interpretation ; but, as there is a doubt on the point, the marginal translation is also embodied in the exposition.

(P. 78.) *Of far higher rank.*]—τάξιν.

LECTURE V.

WARNING AGAINST SPIRITUAL DULNESS, AND WANT OF PROFICIENCY.

HEB. v. 11—14. vi.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. vi. 1.

IN our last discourse, we spoke of the order of Melchisedec as typical of the everlasting priesthood of our Lord. Of Melchisedec St. Paul had much to say, and that, he observes, difficult of interpretation; at least, to persons who had from neglect become “dull of hearing” in spiritual matters, incapable of entering with interest, or even with understanding, into any but the most elementary truths of the Christian faith.—Such, it appears, were the Hebrew Christians, when the Apostle wrote to them: and so serious a symptom did he consider this spiritual dulness of comprehension, that he interrupts the regular course of his subject, and defers for awhile what he has to say of Melchisedec, expressly for the purpose of warning the Hebrews of the dangerous state into

Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. v. 11.

which they had fallen, and rousing them to a continual proficiency in Christian faith; that so their hope of blessedness might become more and more fully assured unto the end.

Whether amongst ourselves, brethren, there is, generally speaking, a greater interest or intelligence in religious subjects, than prevailed among the primitive Christians of Palestine—whether we are more advanced in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I know not; but I fear we should be flattering ourselves, and that perhaps considerably, in taking the affirmative for granted. It is possible that we may be more “dull of hearing” even than they were: and if this possibility exists, it cannot but be profitable to us to attend to the remarkable warning which the Apostle addressed to *them*.

The Christians of Palestine were among the earliest converts to the Gospel. Their Church, being none other than that which began to be formed on the fiftieth day from the resurrection of our Lord, when the Holy Ghost was shed upon the Apostles in the miraculous gift of tongues, and when, upon St. Peter’s preaching, there “were added to them, that same day, about three thousand souls¹.” The Church thus established², and which increased, for a while at least, “daily³,” had existed, when St. Paul addressed to it his inspired Epistle, about thirty years. During this space, had the time been well employed, the Church in Palestine should have become the most forward in the faith; it

*For when, for the time,
ye ought to be teachers.
v. 12.*

¹ Acts ii. 41.

² See the Introduction.

³ Acts ii. 47.

should have been, as it were, a school to which Christians from other countries might have resorted, as to a spiritual Athens, for instruction in the more difficult and loftier parts of that truly divine philosophy, which took its first rise there, and which issued from Mount Sion in various directions throughout the world.

But though, "for the time," the Hebrew Christians ought to have been teachers of others, they had, on

—ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. v. 12.

the contrary, become dull of hearing themselves; they had lost, it should seem, amidst the temptations to which they were exposed, part of their original relish for the Gospel, and part too of that elementary knowledge of Christianity with which they had at first set out. "They had need," as the Apostle says, "that some one should teach them again" the very rudiments of the Christian revelation, the elements with which they began, "the first principles of the oracles of God." They had returned, as it were, into a state of spiritual childhood, and had become like persons who require to be sustained with the simplest diet, having need of milk and not of strong meat.

Such a symptom, among those who had been so long disciples of Christ, was certainly an alarming one. It implied a want of practical experience in that truth, the peculiar characteristic of which is, that it is "the word of righteousness," calculated to make those better who really receive it, and which cannot be rightly discerned, except by such as submit obediently to its sanctifying¹ influ-

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For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. v. 13.

ness," calculated to make those better who really receive it, and which cannot be rightly discerned, except by such as submit obediently to its sanctifying¹ influ-

¹ "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." *John* xvii. 17.

ence. In morals and religion, wisdom and righteousness grow up together. They are inseparable companions, linked to each other, as the soul and body¹, in entire sympathy. Innumerable are the testimonies of Scripture to this effect. "Every one that doeth evil," saith our Lord, "hateth the light." His sins make him, of necessity, "dull of hearing," in regard to "the word of righteousness," and disinclined to receive it. To the same effect St. Paul also declares, that the natural or animal man, one who is devoted to the indulgence of those animal appetites and passions to which we are naturally prone,—such a one, he saith, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned²." They require a spiritual frame of mind, a mind weaned from low and sinful indulgences, to receive them aright. It is those only who are willing to do the Father's will, who have a promise to rely upon, that they shall know of the doctrine of the Son. Faith cannot thrive alone: it must of necessity die, if it be not "perfected," or brought to maturity, by works³.

Was not then the low state of faith in the Hebrew Church justly considered by the Apostle as an alarming symptom, implying as it did a neglect of righteousness, a want of advancement in the Christian character, a stunted growth in religion, a continued infancy, as it were, of piety? For had they been of full age, mature in Christian character, as for the time they ought to have been, would they not have been capable, no longer of "milk," but of "strong meat?" Having

¹ James ii. 26.

² 1 Cor. ii. 14.

³ James ii. 22.

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. v. 14.

their faculties, from the habit of so employing them, duly exercised to discern both good and evil, would they not have readily received those farther attainments in heavenly wisdom, which the Apostle was so anxious to impart?

And here, my friends, let us pause a moment to consider, in reference to ourselves, the importance of that continual advancement in the faith, on which the Apostle so earnestly insists. We are too apt to regard points of faith as matters of indifference, and not to view a spiritual dulness of hearing with any concern. "Let a man's life be correct"—(this is too often the language which we hear)—"and it signifies but little what he believes or disbelieves, what he knows or does not know." This is common language, and, what is strange, most common in the mouths of those who are, in reality, the least concerned about the correctness of their lives; and by whom it is, in fact, used as an excuse for neglecting that evangelical truth, that word of righteousness, which they could not receive without abandoning their sins. With reasoners of this stamp it were almost vain to argue. The error lies deeper than the understanding. One might confute their arguments; but to convince them would be impossible, without first persuading them to renounce their sins. I would rather, on the present occasion at least, address myself to another class,—to those, I mean, who, with far better intentions, are yet too willing to rest content with low attainments in religious knowledge, and have no anxiety to "grow in grace and in the

knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ¹." Observe, my brethren, how different were St. Paul's views. See how seriously he lamented the backwardness of the Hebrews in the knowledge of the truth, their want of "understanding in the way of godliness," their dulness of hearing, their unfitness for the strong food of heavenly wisdom. And is there nothing of this among ourselves? No disinclination to religious inquiry? No unfitness for it, arising from worldliness of life, and a devotion of the affections to far other objects than those which religion proposes? And do not many, who are thus disposed to neglect the food provided for them in the Gospel feast, seek excuses for their spiritual dulness in the plausible opinion already alluded to, that it signifies not what men believe, but what they do; that is, in other words, that practice and principle may easily be disunited? Or else, perhaps, they maintain, that the doctrines of the Gospel are mysterious, or that they are things of a speculative nature, of no use in nourishing the soul to Christian maturity. These, and perhaps many other excuses, may be formed by those who seek to justify a spirit of indifference to the revelation, which God, in his wisdom, has made to us in the Scriptures: but excuses for such a purpose cannot but be wrong, and are, it is clear, utterly at variance with what we are taught by the Apostle.

By him the Gospel is spoken of as that with which we are to study to become more and more acquainted even unto the end; and the study, we are assured, cannot fail (under divine grace) of being productive of continual improvement; the word of God being in

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 18.

its very nature, as we have seen, “the word of *righteousness*.” The more familiar we are with the truth, the more may we expect to partake of her heavenly spirit; the more we converse with God in his word, the more will our souls be irradiated with his grace; the more we contemplate with humility and faith “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” the more may we hope to be “changed,” under the influence of the Holy Spirit, “into the same image” by gradual advances from one attainment in holiness to another, or, as the Apostle expresses it, “from glory to glory¹.”

Again the Apostle compares our spiritual to our natural life. In the one, as in the other, we are to advance from childhood to maturity. To keep ourselves always “babes in Christ,” is to defeat his wise and gracious intentions, that we should “all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ².” Allowance may, and indeed ought to be made for the young, and for those who, in their unavoidable ignorance, have but recently had opportunities of becoming acquainted with “the truth as it is in Jesus.” From the *child* the same proficiency cannot be expected as from the *adult*; nor from the *unlearned labourer* will so much be required as from those whom Providence has favoured with the advantages of education, with more abundant leisure, and with constant opportunities, if they do but use them, of improving themselves in the knowledge of God and his Son, “whom to know is eternal life.”

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18. and iv. 6.

² Eph. iv. 13.

Consider then, I pray you, especially those who have been thus peculiarly favoured, or who are now advancing on in life—consider how far your progress in the knowledge of the truth corresponds with the advantages you have enjoyed, or with the time during which you have been Christians. You were sacramentally dedicated to God in your earliest infancy; then in your childhood, perhaps, you were piously instructed in “the first principles of the oracles of God:”—have you since gone on towards perfection? Or have you lingered still at “first principles?” nay, it may be, become in a manner ignorant of them? the very elements of your religion having been obliterated by neglect and constant collision with the world and its cares, so that, whilst for the time you ought to have been teachers of others, especially, perhaps, of your own children and household, you have need to be taught again the very rudiments of your faith. These things ought not so to be: Christians should press on continually towards perfection; they should daily increase in faith and holiness, not resting in beginnings, not contenting themselves always with rudiments, not lingering for ever about the foundation, but endeavouring to “build themselves up” more and more “on their most holy faith¹,” unto eternal life.

When we insist thus upon proficiency in faith or in the knowledge of Christ, let it not, for a moment, be supposed, that we think either knowledge or faith, alone and of itself, sufficient to salvation. The faith which we inculcate, is that which is perfected by obedience; the knowledge such as not only enlightens, but

¹ St. Jude 20.

at the same time sanctifies the soul; and which we *therefore* press upon you, because it is the great means that God himself has appointed, either of bringing us into the way of righteousness, or of advancing us therein.

Having, at the close of the fifth chapter, adverted to the backwardness of the Hebrews in the faith, the Apostle proceeds in the sixth chapter to urge them on unto perfection, and to point out to them, on the one hand, the danger of neglect, on the other the reward of perseverance. “Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,—let us go on,” he says, “unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

The foundation, indeed, of religion must be first laid, and laid well. It must be fixed deep in repentance from the works of sin which lead unto death, and in faith through Christ towards God. The doctrine of Christian baptism, its superiority to the baptisms of the law, and even to that of John¹, should be well understood, together with its sacramental necessity and value to the Christian disciple, as admitting him to be a covenanted partaker in the benefits of Christ's death. The laying on, too, of hands in Confirmation is highly important in the foundation of the Christian character. Where this apostolical rite is regarded and attended to as it ought to be, there a solid *basis* of religion is likely to be laid at the most critical

¹ Acts xix. 1—5.

period of life, and those defects supplied, under which Infant Baptism, in particular, must otherwise labour. Thus admitted by Baptism into the family of God, and enrolled at Confirmation with his own free consent in the congregation of the faithful, the Christian disciple must farther be taught to lead the rest of his life according to these beginnings; and for this purpose he must be especially grounded in the doctrines of the resurrection of the dead, and of that eternal judgment which is to follow, when he shall have to give a solemn account of his deeds upon earth, and especially of the use or abuse which he shall have made of his Christian calling.

These, though plain and simple, are necessary, fundamental truths of the Christian religion; which must indeed be primarily, but not exclusively, regarded; fixed well in our minds, but not so as to shut out all farther advancement. They are indispensable parts, but not the whole, of our piety: they constitute the foundation, but not the entire building.

It is under this impression that I have undertaken, even from the pulpit, not merely to confine myself to the preaching of the first principles of the Christian religion, but to urge your attention to those farther important and highly edifying truths, which are discussed in Scripture, and especially in the apostolic Epistles; that so we may "go on unto perfection" both of faith and practice. And this, after the example of the Apostle, we will still continue to do, if God permit; though, I *And this will we do, if God permit. vi. 3.* trust, without neglecting those who must be considered as only babes in Christ, or omitting to feed them with food convenient for them.

“That we may go on,” I said, “unto perfection, both of faith and practice.” For consider the danger there is in *not* going on. It is not in human nature to stand still. We must move either forwards or backwards. We have it not at our option to remain stationary. To say nothing of *improvement* in piety and virtue, which ought to be in proportion to the time extended to us, and the want of which under such circumstances becomes sinful; if we neglect to go on, we shall be sure to fall back: we shall lose even “the things which we have wrought¹”; our previous principles and habits will be impaired by neglect.

True piety goes on “from strength to strength,” receives “grace for grace,” “forgets those things which are behind, and reaches forth unto those things that are before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.” Thus only are we safe. Those who, instead of pressing on towards the mark, halt in the race set before them, will fail of the prize. Accordingly, in times of persecution, the negligent and luke-warm Christians are those, who have proved open apostates from the faith. And even now, when there is no temptation to open apostasy, there is still the danger of irreligion, in which spiritual indolence generally terminates. And what will then be the case with such, whether open or virtual apostates from the Gospel? Listen to the reason which the Apostle gives for urging Christians to go on unto perfection:—“For it is impossible,” he says, “for those who were once

¹ See Ezek. xviii. 24.

enlightened" with the knowledge of the truth, "and have tasted of the heavenly gift" of peace which Christ bestows upon the penitent, "and who were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God," in its sacred influence upon the soul, "and the powers of a world to come¹," in affecting the hopes and fears of the human heart,—if such

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. vi. 4—6.

persons shall fall away, it is impossible, the Apostle says, "to renew them again unto repentance." When mercies like these have been experienced, yet experienced in vain, what other means of salvation remain to be applied? Is not this virtually as much a rejection of Christ, the only Saviour of mankind, as if we had actually taken a part in his ignominious crucifixion? Under such circumstances, recovery is, by all *ordinary* rules, impossible. The Almighty may indeed save even the apostate, as he did many of those who actually crucified the Saviour; for "with God nothing is impossible." But at the best such a case is an awful one: and to the Christian minister, acting by a general commission, it may well be called "impossible" to renew such sinners to repentance, when all the ordinary powers of Christianity have already proved unavailing.

Instead of thus thwarting and rendering frustrate, to their own extreme peril, the blessed influence of the

¹ The powerful doctrines "of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." ver. 2.

For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. vi. 7, 8.

Gospel, Christians should be like the fruitful earth, when it returns in plentiful crops the showers and the tillage it receives, that they may receive fresh blessing from God, to make them more fruitful still; not, like a barren soil, producing, with every advantage, only thorns and briers. For they that are such, are, as such, rejected of God, and, like the barren fig-tree, (if they become not more productive,) nigh unto cursing: whose end, in that case, is to be burned. Who can think without horror of such a close of his Christian privileges? Yet such is the penalty of unfruitfulness; that is to say, of a profession of religion, unaccompanied by a practical experience of its power. On the other hand, you have seen the blessing pronounced upon the fruitful soil, even a fresh blessing, accompanied by increasing fruitfulness and proportionate felicity.

Whilst the Apostle addressed to the Hebrew Church his solemn warnings against an indolent, unproductive profession of religion, he could not but express a persuasion of better things. He

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire

thought of the works of Christian love and labour which they had shown, notwithstanding all their fears of persecution, in having ministered and in still ministering to the wants or consolation of their fellow Christians. He was only anxious that this spirit of benevolence should be universal and per-

severing; that not only some, or many, but that each individual amongst them should show the same diligence and zeal for the Gospel to the full completion of his hope in Christ. He desired in short their final perseverance in

the faith of the Gospel, that they might not, through the influence of any temptations, become dull and insensible to spiritual things, but instead might imitate the blessed Father of the faithful, the patriarch Abraham, who not only believed the promises, but persevered long in his faith through many temptations, and so became at length an heir of the promised blessing.

To justify and support this patient perseverance in the faith, it has pleased the Almighty to confirm his promise even with an *oath*. It was thus he dealt with Abraham; and in full reliance on such a promise the patriarch, persevering, obtained the blessing. It is thus too he has dealt with the Christian; that depending upon two things, in which we cannot be deceived, namely, the unimpeachable veracity of God's word and the solemnity of his oath, we might have the strongest possible encouragement, in fleeing to such a sanctuary, to lay hold on the hope proposed to us. Let us then hold it fast. Let no trials prevail with us to abandon it. When tost with

that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. vi. 9—12.

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things

in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High-Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. vi. 13—20.

the billows of temptation, or driven by the storms of persecution, let us only cling the more closely to this anchor of the soul. For an anchor it is, firm and sure, fully able to bear all the stress which our faith can lay upon it; being fixed in the word and oath of God:—an anchor placed where no storms can affect it, even in heaven itself, within the vail of mortality, in the true holy of holies, where all is pure and tranquil, free alike from sin and sorrow, from temptation or trial. For thither has Christ, our Forerunner, gone before us to prepare a place for his persevering followers. There has he entered as our everlasting High-Priest, on whom all our hopes depend; and there, by an enduring faith in Him, must our souls be secured. If once we part from this anchor, our lives are at stake, our souls must be lost, unless by a miracle of mercy we recover our hold.

Earnestly, then, let me exhort you, my brethren, to continual proficiency unto final perseverance in Christian faith and holiness. Remember such perseverance is by no means a matter of course. St. Paul, at least, supposed that those who had experienced much of the power of religion, might still fall away; and deemed it not unnecessary to exhort every one to show unto the end the same diligence with which he had begun. Think not, then, such an admonition superfluous as regards yourselves, however advanced any one may be in Christian piety. “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” Reckon

not all danger to be over, whilst the day of your probation lasts. Slacken not your exertions in the Christian race: but go on to perfection, seeking, by fresh advances continually in faith and holiness, in the knowledge and love of Christ, to secure to yourselves, through his prevailing merits, an abundant entrance into his heavenly kingdom.

LECTURE V.

Hebrews v. 11—14; vi.

NOTES.

(P. 90.) *The elements with which they began.*]—στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς. v. 12.

(P. 90.) *Having need of milk, &c.* v. 12.]—This is like the language of St. Paul, (see 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.); and as such, this and other similar passages have been adduced as part of the evidence to show that he was the writer of the Epistle.

(P. 91.) *Animal man.*]—Ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος, 1 Cor. ii. 14. See note on ch. iv. 12.

(P. 91.) *They require a spiritual frame of mind.*]—Even the heathen philosophers were fully aware, that to moral wisdom intellectual ability was insufficient, unaccompanied by a moral aptitude of character. Accordingly, Aristotle excludes from his school of ethics persons of dissolute manners, as incapable of receiving any benefit there: (τοῖς γὰρ τοιούτοις ἀνόνητος ἡ γνώσις γίνεται, Ethic. Nicom. L. i. c. 3.) “He who would be a competent hearer respecting what is virtuous and right, should be a person of well-regulated conduct:” (δεῖ τοῖς ἔθεσιν ἡχθαι καλῶς κ. τ. λ. Ibid. c. 4.) His moral growth must correspond with that of his knowledge (δεῖ γὰρ συμφῦναι, Ibid. l. vii. c. 3.) It is a similar principle, of still higher application, which the Scriptures recognise, as stated in the exposition.

(P. 97.) *Preaching of the first principles of the Christian religion.*]—τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον. vi. 1.

(P. 99.) *Powers of a world to come,* vi. 5.]—μέλλοντος αἰῶνος, not οἰκουμένης.

(P. 101.) *Full completion of his hope.*]—πληροφορίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀχρι τέλους. vi. 11.

(P. 101.) *With an oath.*]—Δίγων Ἡ μὴν κ. τ. λ. vi. 14.

(P. 101.) *The strongest possible encouragement.*]—παράκλησιν, vi. 18.

(P. 101.) *In fleeing to such a sanctuary.*]—καταφυγόντες, ib.

(P. 101.) *Let us then hold it fast.*]—κρατῆσαι, ib.

LECTURE VI.

THE EVERLASTING PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST, AS TYPIFIED IN MELCHISEDEC.

HEB. vii.

For the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. ver. 28.

To enter fully into the force and beauty of this Epistle, we must continually keep in mind, that it was addressed to Jews. True it is, they were converts to Christianity; but they seem to have still retained many of those lofty prejudices in favour of their own temporary dispensation, which proved to so large a majority of their nation a stumbling-block and a rock of offence. Add to this, the persecutions to which the Christian Jews were exposed from their unconverted fellow-countrymen; and we shall not wonder at the inclination to *judaize*, that is, to retain the Jewish together with the Christian faith, which was so prevalent among them. Such were the persons to whom this Epistle was written: Jewish Christians, who, through prejudice or fear of persecution, or both, endeavoured to unite with their

new profession of the Gospel their old adherence to all the ordinances of the law.

Most necessary, then, was it that St. Paul should show to them, and *that* even from their own Scriptures, not only that the Christian dispensation was far superior to the Levitical, Christ far greater than Moses; but that by Christ the ritual institutions of Moses were abrogated and done away; a process of instruction, which might prove profitable, not to the Christian Jews alone; but, through them, (as no doubt the Apostle anxiously desired) to their connexions, and others of their countrymen, whether in Judea or scattered abroad, who still continued to reject the Gospel.

In the seventh chapter, which it is proposed, with the divine blessing, to explain and apply in the following discourse, St. Paul returns again to the consideration of the Everlasting Priesthood of the Son of God;—the subject which he was about to prosecute before, when he was interrupted¹ by his earnest desire to rouse the Hebrews to greater proficiency in Christian knowledge, that they might not remain for ever “babes in Christ,” or become in effect apostates from him, but might go on unto perfection both of faith and practice.

We have already “considered the High-Priest of our profession,” as he is in that office the Author of eternal salvation; we have now to contemplate his sacerdotal office, as being the *only* perfect and permanent priesthood typified in Melchisedec centuries² before the time of Aaron, whose imperfect priesthood it was

¹ Ch. v. 11.

² *i. e.* More than *four* centuries. Melchisedec, 1913, B. C. Aaron, 1490, B. C.

not only infinitely above, but was intended in due course of time, as predicted by the Psalmist, altogether to annul and set aside.

In pursuing this subject we shall have to observe—

I. How Melchisedec was a type of the Son of God.

II. The superiority of the order of Melchisedec to that of Aaron.

III. The abrogation of the Levitical Priesthood by that of Christ.

IV. And, in conclusion, we shall have to consider practically the hope thus “brought in” for the Christian, and the effect which such a hope should have upon us.

May God, of his mercy in Christ, direct, assist, and bless our endeavours! In the first place, we have to observe, how Melchisedec was a type of Christ.

Of Melchisedec the notice contained in Scripture is very brief, and, as it should seem,

intentionally obscure. He is mentioned in the book of Genesis as being king of Salem, (afterwards called Jerusalem¹) as well as a priest of the Most High God, and as having come forth to meet Abra-

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all. ver. 1, 2.

ham, when he returned from the slaughter of the kings who made war against Sodom and took Lot, Abraham's kinsman, captive. On this occasion, we are told by the sacred historian, that “Melchisedec, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the Most High God: and,” in that capacity, “he blessed Abraham, and said, Blessed be Abram of

¹ See Psalm lxxvi. 2.

the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And Abram gave him tithes" or a tenth part "of all"¹ the spoils which he had taken. This is the only mention made of Melchisedec in the Bible, with the exception of what is said of him in this Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the prediction of the Psalmist here referred to.

Yet most interesting is it to observe, in the brief notice of this Canaanitish prince and priest, the accurate type which the sacred history furnishes of our blessed Lord, to whom he was made like in almost every particular recorded of him in the sacred narrative. One might perhaps say in *every* particular:—One might allude, for instance, even to his bringing forth the "bread and wine" to refresh and strengthen the father of the faithful, as a type of the tender love of Christ, who gave his own body and blood for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls; and who appointed his holy supper of bread and wine to be "a perpetual memory" of that his dying love, and a means of continual communion in its benefits. We might trace also in another part of the conduct of Melchisedec an emblem of the goodness of Christ in *blessing* his people: but let it suffice at present to observe the particulars in which the Apostle himself has pointed out the typical resemblance of Melchisedec to the Son of God.

In the first place, the very *name*, "Melchisedec," "being, by interpretation, King of Righteousness," and his *title* also, as "King of Salem," which is, by

¹ Gen. xiv. 18—20.

interpretation, "King of Peace," are calculated, and were, no doubt, designed, to refer us to the Messiah, who is emphatically spoken of, in the Scriptures, even of the Old Testament, as *the King of Righteousness*¹ and *the Prince of Peace*². The union, too, of these royal attributes with the office of priest is another circumstance in which Melchisedec strongly prefigured Christ.

But it is chiefly in the peculiar order or character of his *priestly office*, that the Royal High-Priest of Salem is to be regarded as a type of his Redeemer. As far as a mere human being could be, he became an image, or, if not the very image, at least a shadowy resemblance, an adumbration of the eternity of our Lord's priesthood: for in the record of Melchisedec, you will observe, there is no notice of his parent, or genealogy of his birth or decease; so that he is not, as Aaron was, well known in regard to the circumstances of his descent, and the duration of his life, but a mysterious personage; being, *historically speaking*, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," especially in regard to the tenure of his priestly office. The Jewish high-priests followed each other in regular succession. In the case of each person who held the sacred dignity, the beginning of the days of his priesthood, and the end of his ecclesiastical life, were both matters of notoriety, most distinctly recorded. But, in Mel-

—first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is, King of peace. ver. 2.

Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. ver. 3.

¹ See ch. i. 8.

² See Isa. ix. 6.

chisedec, we have a priesthood, in which there was no succession; no "beginning of days," when he first entered upon his office, at least none recorded; nor yet any "end of his life," when he transmitted his functions to another: but, as the sole priest of his order, he is presented to us, in the sacred history, as "abiding" in his office "continually:" that is to say, his priesthood stands forth, in Scripture, as a sort of perpetual office, without any recorded termination; that so he might more faithfully prefigure the Son of God, who, as our High-Priest in heaven, "*ever liveth* to make intercession for us."

An historical type is in effect a prophecy emblematically interwoven with the sacred narrative. The type now before us is more especially to be regarded as prophetic, from the promise, contained in the Psalms, of a great High-Priest to come after the order of Melchisedec. Viewed in this light, how valuable is it, as part of the evidence of Christianity! what strong attestation does it supply, both to the Gospel generally, and particularly to the doctrines of atonement and intercession connected with the priesthood of our Lord! For consider, in the first place, the remarkable fact, that there should exist at all, in the person of a Canaanitish king, a priest of the most high God, at the very time too when Abraham himself had been rescued from idolatry only by an express call from Heaven; then, that of this royal Priest the notice should be so mysteriously brief; but, at the same time, that what *is said* should so strongly mark him out—yea, that the very *omissions* in his story should contribute also to mark him out, as a figure of the true King of Righteousness, the true Prince of Peace, the only eternal Priest of

the Most High. These are circumstances which never could have occurred fortuitously, by the blind orderings of a wayward chance. The coincidence must have been designed. The prediction, indeed, contained in the Psalms, gives us express assurance that this order of Melchisedec was intended from the first, *i. e.* nineteen hundred years before the Christian era, to prefigure the priesthood of the Messiah. Let the fact give fresh confidence to our faith in Christ, especially in his atoning sacrifice and ever merciful intercession.

Having considered how Melchisedec was a prophetic type of the Son of God, we have now to observe, in the second place,

II. The superiority of the order of Melchisedec to that of Aaron.

For consider how great a high-priest this Prince of Salem was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils; thereby acknowledging Melchisedec to be, spiritually, his own superior. Even among the Israelites, where all the people were by descent equal, being alike the children of Abraham, still the divine injunction that Levi should receive tithes from his brethren, placed that tribe in a position of spiritual pre-eminence above the rest. Much more was this the case, when Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, whose descent was not counted from the family of which Abraham sprung; being, as we have already

Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of

*whom it is witnessed
that he liveth, ver. 4-8.*

observed, involved in mystery, or, rather, unrecorded. The benediction also which Melchisedec pronounced upon the patriarch was a further mark of his superiority. But if Melchisedec was thus superior to Abraham, how much more to Levi! Add to this, that whatever superiority of spiritual rank Levi might possess over his brethren, the Levitical priests were, like their brethren, mortal, and are so spoken of in Scripture: whereas Melchisedec, if not actually exempt from dying, is spoken of only as living; no allusion whatever being made to his mortality.

We might even allege, as a farther proof of the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood, that the tribe of Levi might be said to have virtually paid tithes to Melchisedec in the person of their great progenitor. What Abraham did in this instance, he did as the federal head of a chosen race, for himself and for his descendants also, who were in effect implicated in his acknowledgment of the spiritual rank of the mysterious priest of Salem.

*And as I may so say,
Levi also, who receiveth
tithes, payed tithes in
Abraham. For he was
yet in the loins of his
father, when Melchise-
dec met him, ver. 9, 10.*

In Melchisedec then we have a type of a *mysterious* High-Priest to come, of a perpetual order, far superior to that of Aaron; and we shall not therefore be surprised at what we have in the third place to consider; viz.—

III. The abrogation of the Levitical priesthood by that of our Lord.

The very prediction of a Priest to arise after the order of Melchisedec, did in fact imply the abrogation of the Levi-

*If therefore perfection
were by the Levitical*

tical priesthood, and with it also of the Levitical law (of which the priesthood formed the leading feature,) as of a dispensation merely introductory, and not calculated to give, what man so much requires, "perfect" remission of sins, or to promote his advancement towards perfection in holiness. Had "perfection been attainable by it, what need would there have been of a different sacerdotal order, accompanied of necessity by a change in the whole dispensation of religion? But such an order was prefigured, as we have seen, centuries before the Levitical priesthood was appointed; and was clearly predicted, in the book of Psalms, at the very time when the Levitical law flourished, if we may so speak, in its greatest glory.

Accordingly the Messiah, to whom the prediction was spoken, was not of the descendants of Aaron, but belonged to another tribe, which, by the Mosaic law, had no part in the services of the altar. For it is clear from the Gospel history, as every Christian must allow, that "our Lord was of Judah"—the tribe out of which the prophets also had foretold that Messiah should come. The circumstance was an obvious proof of the intended abrogation of the Levitical priesthood; but still more strongly was this evidenced by the promise of a Priest, not of a different *tribe* merely, but altogether of a different *order*, established on a totally different

priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. ver. 11, 12.

For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. ver. 13, 14.

And it is yet far more evident: for that

after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. ver. 15—17.

principle. The law of the Levitical priesthood was that only of “a carnal commandment,” that is to say, a commandment relating only to a carnal succession of persons, who held the priesthood no longer than while they were on earth in the *flesh*. But when Christ was made a Priest, it was after the power of an endless, indissoluble life, a Priest, not on earth only for a few years, but “for ever” in heaven.

For, as we have already intimated, the law being weak and unprofitable, considered as a final dispensation of pardon and sanctification, and incapable of giving either of these in perfection, it was disannulled by the Gospel, and a better hope brought in, by which we might draw near to God with peace of conscience and purity of heart. The prophetic oath, indeed, of the Almighty, by which our Lord was constituted a High-Priest, indicates him to be the Surety of a better and more durable covenant than the law, the priests of which were made without an oath. As surety of such a covenant, he is not removed from his office, as the Jewish priests were, by death; but abideth continually, retaining his priesthood for ever, without any transfer or succession.

For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord swear and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. ver. 18—24.

transmitting an office, which was in fact too weighty for them to bear, to others, who again handed it on to their successors: How could such priests carry on to perfection the work of intercession? The law, then, made nothing perfect; but the Gospel does. It provides *perfect* remission of sins for the penitent believer in Jesus Christ, and the power of attaining daily more and more nearly to *perfection* in holiness. On a previous occasion, it became my duty, my Christian Brethren, to exhort you to go on unto perfection: on the present, it is my privilege to point out to you, that the Gospel was expressly intended to make you perfect. For, in this discourse, I have set before you the Son of God as our High-Priest for ever in Heaven, perfect in holiness, in innocence, in purity, as also in suffering; and perfect, too, in power; fully able to guide you by his example, and to atone for your sins by the merits of his spotless sacrifice, to plead your cause with the Father at whose right hand he is seated in glory, and to carry on to its full completion your everlasting salvation. Were he still on earth, we might doubt his power; but he is ascended up on high far above all heavens: yet there, though to our conceptions so far removed, he is ever mindful of our wants, ever attentive to our prayers, ever interceding for our pardon and improvement. On Him, then, let us fully rely in the pursuit of perfection. Looking to him, we may press on without fear in the path of peace, of holiness, and of life eternal. Through Him, as our propitiation and advocate, we may draw near unto God, with reverence indeed, but without terror; fully assured of pardon on our repentance, fully assured of acceptance for our services, and ultimately,

join not the Law with the Gospel. We build not three tabernacles, one for Moses, one for Elias, and one for our Lord; nor yet two, one for Aaron, and another for Christ; but have only one, "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man¹," in which Moses and Elias and Aaron shall all minister to the Son of God. Such at least is our profession. But in practice, brethren, are we always consistent? Do we adhere, in simplicity, to the hope of the Gospel? It is only through Christ, as our Everlasting High-Priest with God, that a better hope has been brought in than any other religion but the Christian could ever maintain, and a better covenant secured than we could otherwise have looked for. Is it then on our Heavenly High-Priest that your hopes of peace and eternal life are placed? Is it to his gracious covenant of mercy that you look for salvation? Is he placed conspicuously, in the eye of your faith, as the sole meritorious cause of your acceptance, and your only Mediator, with God the Father? We may not perhaps, as some Christians do, join with Christ other priests or other mediators: but are we in no danger of leaving out even Him? Are there no Christians, who virtually exclude Christ from their religious code; calling themselves by his name, yet forgetting, or attaching no importance to what he has done, or still lives to do, for them, as their High-Priest for ever with God? Are there none, who think a social morality, and an outward correctness, not only important (which undoubtedly they are), but sufficient for their salvation? never reflecting, apparently, that,

¹ Ch. viii. 2.

without a Priest to atone and intercede for us, we sinners cannot draw nigh unto God with hope; and that a Priest fully able to discharge these offices for us, there is none but the Son of God; no access to the Father, but by him. Without a propitiation, without an intercessor, we can have no hope of salvation: but we have in Christ an all-sufficient High-Priest, who has already made a perfect expiation for sin, and who is able to save “to the uttermost,” that is, to complete the salvation of, “those who come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” In every step of our Christian life, yea daily, if not hourly, we may and ought to look up to him for pardon of the past and fresh assistance for the future.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. ver. 25.

Such a High-Priest did we sinners need, and such has Christ the righteous shown himself for us, “holy” in all his relations towards God, “harmless” in his conduct towards men, “undefiled” with any personal stain, “separate” in short altogether “from” all participation in the offences and pollutions of “sinful men,” and, as such, exalted by his ascension, far above all heavens, to the right hand of the Majesty on High. A High-Priest of this perfect character needed not to offer daily sacrifices as under the law, first, for his own sins, and then for the people. Sins of his own he had none to require expiation; and those of his people he then

For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. ver. 26, 27.

expiated, when he “made upon the cross (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world¹.” Under the law, indeed, repeated sacrifices were necessary, and after all were insufficient

For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.
ver. 28.

to expiate sin. For the Priests of the Law were but mortal beings, of like passions and infirmities with ourselves; who held their office but for a time, and who were liable to sin. But the word which God confirmed with an oath, and which was uttered by the Psalmist after the promulgation of the law, constituted as our High-Priest, not a creature, but the Son of God; who should be our Priest for ever, a perfect High-Priest, free from every fault, yea complete in every excellence. On such a High-Priest we may fully depend: there is no flaw in his atonement, no cessation of his intercession on our behalf.

Well, then, may we say with the Apostle, that a better hope has been brought in, a better covenant established, and that better therefore ought we to be, brethren, to whom such hopes have been revealed, with whom such a covenant has been made. The law made nothing perfect; nor was it to be expected that it should. For when the Jews looked to their priests, the sureties of their covenant, they beheld in them frail, often bad men; individuals who, at the best, needed expiation themselves: How could such priests make atonement for their sins? They saw them, moreover, sinking one after another into the grave;

¹ Communion Service.

LECTURE VI.

Hebrews vii.

NOTES.

(P. 112.) *Melchisedec.*]—Some have conjectured Melchisedec to have been *Shem*; others *Job*. When the latter lived, is uncertain; but probably he was not contemporary with Abraham; as Shem, according to the Hebrew chronology, was; for the meeting between Abraham and Melchisedec took place about 60 or 70 years before the death of Shem. But St. Paul seems to intimate that Melchisedec and Abraham were of different families (*μη γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν*, ver. 6.) One might offer a conjecture, (perhaps as plausible as the above,) that Melchisedec might be Enoch; who had “no beginning of days” after the flood, “nor end of life” at all, having, by special exemption from death, passed into the heavens (the true “holy of holies”), as a type of our blessed Lord ascending thither as our High-Priest. Elijah was kept from death, and Moses from corruption, to minister in an especial manner to Christ at the transfiguration: might not Enoch be translated with some such design? But these are, at the best, only conjectures.

There is another sense, in which the Apostle’s language concerning Melchisedec might, possibly, be explained; viz. as applicable to him *officially*. Amongst us it is said, “The king never dies:” might it not also be said, “The King of Righteousness never dies?” Melchisedec being understood as the *royal* title of the monarch, not the *proper name* of the individual.

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transmitting an office, which was in fact too weighty for them to bear, to others, who again handed it on to their successors: How could such priests carry on to perfection the work of intercession? The law, then, made nothing perfect; but the Gospel does. It provides *perfect* remission of sins for the penitent believer in Jesus Christ, and the power of attaining daily more and more nearly to *perfection* in holiness. On a previous occasion, it became my duty, my Christian Brethren, to exhort you to go on unto perfection: on the present, it is my privilege to point out to you, that the Gospel was expressly intended to make you perfect. For, in this discourse, I have set before you the Son of God as our High-Priest for ever in Heaven, perfect in holiness, in innocence, in purity, as also in suffering; and perfect, too, in power; fully able to guide you by his example, and to atone for your sins by the merits of his spotless sacrifice, to plead your cause with the Father at whose right hand he is seated in glory, and to carry on to its full completion your everlasting salvation. Were he still on earth, we might doubt his power; but he is ascended up on high far above all heavens: yet there, though to our conceptions so far removed, he is ever mindful of our wants, ever attentive to our prayers, ever interceding for our pardon and improvement. On Him, then, let us fully rely in the pursuit of perfection. Looking to him, we may press on without fear in the path of peace, of holiness, and of life eternal. Through Him, as our propitiation and advocate, we may draw near unto God, with reverence indeed, but without terror; fully assured of pardon on our repentance, fully assured of acceptance for our services, and ultimately,

through the merits of our High-Priest, of a gracious reward for our humble labours. How strongly should this hope stimulate us in the pursuit of perfection ! that as Christ our High-Priest is perfect, so we also, his people, may, through faith in Him, obtain perfect pardon and peace : whilst in imitation of his example, as well as in dependence on his aid, we press on more and more every day towards perfection in holiness.

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(P. 113.) *Not of the descendants of Aaron.*]—John the Baptist, the greatest of Aaron’s descendants, (comp. Luke i. 5. and vii. 28.) came to bear witness to Christ.

(P. 113.) *An obvious proof.*]—πρόδηλον γάρ. ver. 14.

(P. 113.) *Still more strongly evidenced.*]—περισσότερον ἐν κατάδηλον, ver. 15.

(P. 114.) *For there is verily a disannulling, &c.* ver. 18, 19.]—These verses, by a different punctuation, might be better, perhaps, translated thus: “For there is brought about a disannulling of the commandment going before, because of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof, (for the law made nothing perfect,) and an introduction of a better hope, by which we draw nigh unto God.” See the Greek. The difference consists in placing οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος in a parenthesis. The μέν and δέ merely mark the different clauses of the sentence. It was *as* introductory to the Gospel (ἐντολή προαγούση), and *only* so, that the Law could give the hope of eternal life.

(P. 117.) *Shewn himself for us.*]—ἔπρεπεν. ver. 26.

LECTURE VII.

OUR GREAT HIGH-PRIEST THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT.

HEB. viii.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. ver. 10.

ON this great festival¹ of the Christian Church, we commemorate the miraculous descent upon the Apostles of that Holy Spirit, by which they were enabled to preach and establish in the world the everlasting Gospel. On such a day, we cannot but direct our thoughts to the subject thus connected with it;—a subject, which is indeed of the first importance both to Christianity at large, and personally also to ourselves. In doing this, however, there is no necessity that we should interrupt that course of religious contemplation, in which we have been for some weeks past engaged;—the consideration, I mean, of the Epistle to the Hebrews. For it so happens, that in

¹ Whitsunday.

the part next to be explained (comprising the eighth chapter), our attention is expressly called to the promise of the Holy Spirit, as a grand distinguishing blessing of the New or Christian Covenant. This chapter, then, will furnish most appropriate matter for our present consideration; and I therefore proceed in my exposition of it in humble dependence upon that Spirit, without whom my endeavours to explain, or yours to understand, His word, would equally be in vain. Of the Epistle, as far as we have hitherto considered it, the sum, the grand conclusion, the completion to the Apostle's arguments, the crowning article, is this;—

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High-Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high-priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount. ver. 1—5.

that we have in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, a royal, heavenly High-Priest, one exalted above all principality and power, yet a minister of the sanctuary, not, however, in any earthly tabernacle, but a minister of the real holy of holies in that true celestial tabernacle in the eternal world, which the Lord pitched, and not man. There Christ is the great minister of sacred things, having, as the office of High-Priest necessarily implied, offerings to make, even the sacrifice of himself, and the incense of his people's services. In *heaven* he ministers, not in the tabernacle at Shiloh, or in the temple at Jerusalem, which had still, when the Apostle wrote, its own priests "offering gifts ac-

according to the law." Them Christ was to supersede, not on earth, but in a far more glorious way, even by bringing in those everlasting realities, of which the Jewish priesthood, and indeed all the appointments of the Mosaic tabernacle, were but so many temporary types, so many faint, imperfect copies, to be done away as soon as the original prototype should be revealed.

It is not, then, an earthly, transient, subordinate ministry of this kind that our Lord hath obtained, but a far more excellent one, adapted to that better covenant, established upon better promises, of which he is the mediator.

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. ver. 6.

From the ministry and mediation of the New Covenant, we proceed to its *necessity*, as intimated by the prophets, and as shown by the very imperfections of the Mosaic dispensation;—that Old Covenant, in contradistinction to which the Christian Covenant is called New. For had the first covenant been faultless, it would have continued: had there been no occasion for blame as to the performance of the terms required, there would have been no need to look for a place far holier than the tabernacle or the temple, in which to establish a second covenant, free from so fundamental an objection. But there was in the first covenant far too much occasion for dissatisfaction. The people of Israel are continually reproved by their prophets for departing from it. Though the promises of

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded¹ saith the I

the Mosaic dispensation, as considered in itself, and as distinct from those heavenly predictions of mercy, which are in truth more ancient than the law, being coeval with the fall of man—though the promises, I say, of the first covenant were of an inferior kind, referring only to the enjoyments of earthly prosperity in the land of Canaan, and therefore requiring no more than a correct adherence to the letter of the Mosaic institutions and commands, still with this covenant the chosen people were unable to comply; they could not fulfil its conditions; “like a broken bow,” which disappoints the archer of his aim, they “started aside” continually, at first even into idolatry, and when cured of this by their long captivity in Babylon, still they fell off into disobedience. Accordingly, a *new* covenant was promised, which should supersede the first. “For finding fault with” his people for not adhering to that covenant, God promised, by Jeremiah, to “make a new one with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;”—a covenant, to which we Gentiles also should be admitted; one totally different from that which the Almighty made at Mount Sinai, when he led his people through the wilderness: for in that, as we have seen, they continued not; and therefore the Lord could no longer, under such a covenant, “regard them” as his people. The nature of this new covenant is described in the words of our text, and in the two following verses, from which we have now to learn its leading features.

I. In the first place, the new or Christian covenant is distinguished by a *promise of divine teaching*.

The people of Israel, under their covenant, were, it is true, taught of God; but not in a direct manner;

even their moral law was written only on tables of stone, not on their hearts. This is the great reason, why they were unable to obey it: the corruption of the human heart is too great to allow it of itself, without the prevenient and assisting grace of God, to keep the divine commandments. Hence the giving of the tables of the law to the Israelites is called, in another place¹, the ministration "of the letter only," nay, "the ministration of condemnation," or, more strongly still, "the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones." Such was "the law given by Moses," in itself "holy, and just, and good," but meeting with hearts not inclined to receive it, though naturally calculated to promote life, it was "found to be unto death²."

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. ver. 10.

What, then, did the Gospel do? Did it abrogate that holy law of the Decalogue, and introduce one more suited to man's corruption? No! it took the other course, not of corrupting the law, but of enlightening the understanding and sanctifying the heart of man. The commandments are still the same. The moral law of God is, in fact, unchanged; as it is, in itself, unchangeable. But there is this important difference in the manner of giving the commandments. They are no longer "written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God;" no longer engraven "in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." "I will put my laws," saith the Lord, "into their mind,"

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

² See Rom. vii. which chapter is parallel to v. 7—13 of this.

that we may understand them, “and write them in their hearts,” that we may remember, love, and obey them: and then, indeed, will “He be to us a God, and we shall be to Him a people.” It will be no formal covenant, such as we shall be unable to keep, and which shall only aggravate our condemnation, but one of “grace and truth,” in which *we* shall draw nigh to God in obedience, and he to us in blessing.

Earnestly, then, let us pray, as indeed we are continually admonished to do in the liturgy of our Church, that we may not only hear the divine commands, but that God would be pleased to write all his laws in our hearts; that so we may prove Christians indeed, partakers really in the benefits of the new covenant.

We have said that the Gospel is peculiarly distinguished by a promise of the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, teaching men with their minds to know, and with their hearts to love, the laws of God. Under the law, or rather by the law—for even under the law, yea, and before the law, the Gospel was in force, as it were, by anticipation, being in some degree intimated from the very first: and therefore we find pious men of old, as, for instance, the Psalmist, praying God to open their eyes to discern his law, not to take his Holy Spirit from them, but to give them the comfort of his help:—But *by* the law no such help was promised, no divine teaching vouchsafed. The law was engraven on stones, then written with ink: and this law was read to the people, and expounded by a class of men, a portion of the scribes, expressly devoted to the study of it, and thence called “lawyers,” or teachers of the law. These scribes explored

the law for themselves, and then taught it to the people: nor was there any other help. Hence we find even the Apostles, when they first became followers of Christ, appealing, as a matter of course, to the authority of the public teachers of the law¹. Now this was no longer to be the case under the Gospel. Christians were not to be left, on the one hand, to their own natural inclination and understanding, nor yet, on the other, to the mere dictation of the teacher of the law; but were to have, moreover, and chiefly, in fact, to depend upon, the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit of God. “*They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.*” But what are we to conclude? Is human instruction unnecessary? Or are the labours of the Christian ministry unauthorized by the New Testament? Far be it, brethren, that I should lead you into so dangerous an error! Yea, far be it, that I should derive from the pure word of God an excuse for indolence in myself, or for fanaticism in any of my hearers! The language of the prophet is undoubtedly strong; and, at first sight, it almost seems to set aside all human teaching. But that this is not the real intention of his words, will appear from the following considerations.

First of all, the Apostle is not, perhaps, speaking of religious knowledge generally, but of those first

And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.
ver. 11.

¹ “Why say the scribes,” &c. Mark ix. 11.

principles of religion, which relate to a belief in God¹; —principles, which in the Christian Church are acquired almost without any teaching, especially where there is, from the prevenient grace of God, a heart honestly disposed to that which is good. But be this as it may, we must never interpret one part of Scripture so as to contradict another. Now, from other parts of holy writ, it is abundantly evident that God himself did not, as a matter of fact, leave the teaching of the Gospel solely to the internal agency of his Holy Spirit on the minds and hearts of men. Christ sent his Apostles, and they, by his authority, sent others, to preach the word, commanding that they should be received with respect, and, at the peril of men's souls, heard with attention.

The *efficacy*, indeed, of all their preaching depended upon the Holy Spirit, “opening the hearts” of their hearers (as in the case of Lydia of Thyatira, mentioned in the Acts²;) to attend to the things which were spoken, that “the word preached might be mixed with faith in them that heard it.” Paul planted, and Apollos watered: but it was God alone who gave the increase. They were “labourers together” under the divine Spirit, who alone could command the harvest. And so must it be still. The Christian minister must preach, and the Christian disciple must hear, as if all depended upon preaching and hearing; for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” being preached. Yet both preacher and hearers must

¹ “They shall not teach, &c., saying, *Know the Lord.*” ver. 11.

² Ch. xvi. 14.

look, in humble prayer, for the effect of their endeavours, to Him who can give laws to the mind, not only to the ear, and write them on the heart. We, the ministers of Christ, are but instruments which the Spirit of Christ uses; and therefore, after we have done all in our power, it is of no avail, unless the Holy Ghost "give you understanding in the way of godliness," and "incline your hearts to keep his laws." On him, therefore, you mainly depend, especially for a sanctifying knowledge of the truth. The hearing of instruction is our own act, combined with that of the preacher: but the profitable and obedient receiving of it into the mind and heart cannot take place without the help of the Holy Spirit. Well, then, may it be said, in the strong language common to the prophets, especially in matters of comparison, that under the Gospel it is not, as under the law, the priest at whose lips only the people are to seek knowledge, but it is the divine teaching of the Holy Spirit which bestows it. The priest is, as we have said, but an instrument; a necessary¹ one, it is true, in all ordinary cases; but still only an instrument. The Spirit is the efficient cause of heavenly wisdom. Without his enlightening and purifying grace, neither the most diligent study of our own, nor the best instruction from others, nor both combined, could avail to make us wise unto salvation. The prophets, in their emphatic manner, declare that God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; not intending thereby to disparage sacrifice, but to exalt mercy; not wishing to set aside the one, but merely to pre-

¹ "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." *Jerem.* iii. 15.

vent it from being put on a level with the other. So is it here: Christians are said to be taught of God, not of each other; not to denounce human teaching as unnecessary, but to show that, *by itself*, it is of no avail, and to keep us from confounding it at all, in importance or efficacy, with that inward teaching, which is the mainspring of Christian piety.

If, indeed, the teaching of divine grace were intended to dispense with all outward helps, then where were the use of the Bible itself? We might at once fanatically throw aside the sacred volume, and sit watching all the day, in indolent reveries, or in frightful contortions, for the imaginary workings within of fresh inspiration from above. But God, in his mercy, prevents us from this wreck at once of reason and of faith! Let us hold the sacred doctrines of the Gospel in "truth and soberness," and not give the scoffer occasion, from our follies, to call in question the truth either of Christianity itself, or (which is in effect the same) of our Protestant view of it.

Look, then, for the promise of divine teaching in the sober and diligent use of the means of grace; among which the ministry of the word is a prominent one: and, looking for it thus, remember, for your comfort, that "the promise is to *all*¹" Christians; to every class, condition, and sex, as well as to almost every age of life. There is no monopoly of knowledge in the Christian, none at least in the Protestant Church; no confining of it to one order of men. The scribes under the law took away the key of knowledge from the people. The same is done, in a great mea-

¹ Acts ii. 39.

sure, if not, indeed, quite as effectually, in the Papal Church. Heavy, however, is the woe denounced against such withholding of the truth from the people of God: and in a Protestant country, where the means of grace are within the reach of all, and the Bible is open in our own language to every one's perusal, and the contents of that sacred book are read in our churches, and more or less explained in every parish on each returning Sabbath, there an exclusive possession of truth cannot exist. The clergy may, or at least ought, to possess more professional learning than others; they may be better theologians; but to all in their several degrees is promised, and all should strive, personally, to possess knowledge enough to save their souls, praying for the enlightening grace of the Holy Spirit, and using diligently the means to which that Spirit has annexed his blessing. The promise is universal. "*All shall know me,*" saith the Lord, "*from the least to the greatest.*" All *may* know God unto salvation; and all, even the least¹ in the Gospel kingdom, *do* in fact know, since the effusion of the Spirit from on high, more of God and his will, than the wisest knew before that wonderful event took place.

The Gospel, then, is, to all who embrace it, the ministration of the *Spirit*, as opposed to the law, which was the ministration of the *letter*; it not only gives us *precepts*, but *grace* to receive them; it leaves us not merely to *human* teaching, but provides us with a *divine* Instructor, in the Spirit of Truth, who is ever

¹ "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein," (*i. e.* in "the way of holiness.") *Isa.* xxxv. 8.

ready, by his secret yet real influence on our minds and hearts, to enable all of us, high and low, to understand and obey the revealed will of God sufficiently to our souls' salvation.

Such is the first distinguishing feature of the Gospel which our text offers to our notice—the *promise of divine influence*, “*the ministration of the Spirit.*”

II. The other characteristic which we proposed, in the second place, to consider, and on which the first depends, is the *provision*, which the Gospel makes in the priesthood of Christ, *for the pardon of our sins.*

The law made no real sacrifices for sin, sufficient in themselves to purify the conscience; and therefore gave no spiritual assistance, to remove our ignorance

and hardness of heart. It is the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin; and it is through him, therefore, that mankind have

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. ver. 12.

obtained the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. Four thousand years had elapsed, and the Spirit was not yet come in any measure at all calculated to remove the general ignorance of mankind. At this period, Jesus dies on the cross; and within fifty days from his resurrection, within ten days of his ascension, as our High-Priest, into the true holy of holies, he sheds upon his Apostles that miraculous effusion of the Spirit, of which we this day keep up the remembrance. Then, for the first time, were their minds fully enlightened with the knowledge of the truth; then were their hearts more deeply impressed than before with a value and zeal for it. How different is St. Peter, preaching boldly to the murderers of Jesus the doctrines of the cross, from that Peter, who, a few weeks

back, but before the crucifixion, had denied his Lord in the house of Caiaphas ! Nay, how different were all these Apostles, now declaring the pure spiritual Gospel of the kingdom of heaven, from those who asked our Lord, on the very day of his ascension, if he would at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ! And whence this difference ? Sin was now atoned for ; the sacrifice was presented in heaven ; and grace descended. The Son of God was gone to his Father, having accomplished our justification, and then “ the Comforter, who is the Spirit of Truth ” and “ of Holiness,” came to sanctify us. To use a scriptural expression, God had “ shined in the hearts of the Apostles : ” His Holy Spirit of truth had put into their mind the law of faith, and written it on the fleshly tables within. And thus it is that the truth of God has been brought to mankind, transmitted from the Apostles, through the ministry of the Church and the preservation of the Scriptures, even to us, at least to our outward ears. But to be effectual to our salvation, it must go farther. It must be “ grafted inwardly in our hearts : ” and that can only be by divine “ grace.” The same Spirit who inspired the Apostles to preach the word, must enlighten us to understand, and dispose us to adhere to it. And, praised be God ! we have the same grounds for expecting this mercy still, as far as it is still necessary. Divine influence was indeed extended to the Apostles in a pre-eminent, and to the primitive Church generally, in an unusual degree ; but it is not withheld from us. We have the same High-Priest as they had, to rely upon for the pardon of our sins, and, through his mediation, the same divine grace, so far as our duties require it, to give us help

in all time of our need. The first covenant could not give divine assistance, because it did not procure pardon; the second covenant secures the latter through Christ, and, therefore, gives the former in the influences of the Holy Spirit. The reason given by Jehovah for putting his laws into the minds of his people, and writing them in their hearts, is this: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Many of you, my brethren, are about to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Go then to that holy table, there to commemorate the sacrifice of your dying Lord, now your High-Priest in heaven, who not only has procured the pardon of your sins, but, in consequence, sends down his Holy Spirit to enlighten your minds and to renew your hearts to obedience. It is to his merits and mediation you owe this enlightening and sanctifying grace: and most appropriate is it, that on this day you should keep the perpetual memory of the Lord's death, and look, in the meet participation of the holy Supper, for fresh supplies of that divine influence which gives true wisdom and holiness.

Such then, my brethren, is the efficacy of the Gospel: first, pardon of sins, or justification through Christ; then, sanctification from his blessed Spirit. These are mercies which the law could never accomplish: and therefore it was abolished. The very language of the prophet, which speaks of a New Covenant, implies the annulling of the Old. What was it in fact but an introductory dispensation? a "commandment going before" the Gospel, to lead the way

for its reception?—a *commandment*, and nothing more, unattended by any spiritual principle of life¹?

As a temporary dispensation, it was, of necessity, mortal; gradually it decayed as time advanced, and sunk at length, as it were through age, into utter dissolution, vanishing away before the New and everlasting Covenant, even that covenant of mercy in the Promised Seed of the Woman, which began to dawn to our first

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. ver. 13.

parents when driven from Eden, shone more clearly to the patriarchs, became brighter still to the Prophets, and burst forth in all its splendour under the Gospel.

As disciples, then, of the everlasting High-Priest Christ Jesus, commemorating on this glorious festival the descent of the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles, we are no longer under the law, but under grace. But what then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? Far be from us so awful a perversion of our mercies! No; the very *object* of divine grace, in the gift of the Holy Spirit, is to produce *obedience* to the commands of God; to work in us both to will and to do that which is *good*; to enable us to understand the divine “laws,” and to write them in our hearts. Would you know, then, if you have the Spirit of Christ, and are really his true disciples? Look within. Examine carefully if you understand the laws of God, as contained in his written word, and, moreover, if you love and delight to obey them. These are the genuine fruits of the Spirit, and the only sure

¹ Such as “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”
Rom. viii. 2.

proofs of his influence. If you are thus inclined to do the commandments of God, and *that* not as formal duties prescribed to you by others, but from understanding and loving them yourselves; then is the work of God's Spirit manifest within you. You are truly partakers in the efficacy of the Christian Covenant; and, through Christ, you may reverently, but cheerfully, look up to the Father as your God; and, as one of his "people," may hope for his blessing here, and for a portion in his everlasting kingdom.

LECTURE VII.

Hebrews viii.

NOTES.

(P. 124.) *The completion—the crowning article.*—κεφάλαιον ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις. ver. 1.

(P. 124.) *For every high-priest, &c. For if he were on earth, &c.* ver. 3, 4.]—The first “For” refers to λειτουργός; the second to σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς.

(P. 124.) *The Temple—had still its own priests.*—Jerusalem was not destroyed till a few (probably about eleven) years later. (See the Introduction.) The copy made in the Mount (ver. 5.) continued for some time after the original had been published, that men might study the resemblance, and feel the force of the prediction.

(P. 125.) *Faint, imperfect copies.*—i. e. after the pattern shown in the Mount.

(P. 125.) *Faultless.*—ἄμειπτος (ver. 7.) may be active or passive: both meanings are given in the exposition. Of τόπος also two meanings are given: “there would have been no need to look for a place,” &c. That τόπος signifies a place in the latter sense is abundantly shown in *Schleusner’s Lexicon*. Take for instance, *Matt.* xxiv. 15. “Standing in the holy place.” (ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ.)

(P. 131.) *On the heart.*—“The Gospel, that new law which Christ delivered to the world, is not merely a dead letter without us, but a quickening spirit within us”—* * * *. The secret mysteries of a divine life, of a new nature, of Christ formed in our hearts, cannot be written or spoken: language and expressions cannot reach them; neither can they ever be truly understood, except the soul be kindled from within, and

awakened into the life which animates them. A painter that would draw a rose, though he may flourish some likeness of it in figure and colour, can yet never paint the scent and fragrantcy; or if he would draw a flame, he cannot put a constant heat into his colours; he cannot make his pencil drop a sound, as the echo in the epigram mocks at him, ("Si vis similem pingere, pingere sonum.") All the skill of cunning artizans and mechanics cannot put a principle of life into a statue of their own making. Neither are we able to enclose in words and letters the life, soul, and essence of any spiritual truths, and as it were incorporate it in them. * * * * No surely: "there is a spirit in man, and the *inspiration of the Almighty* giveth understanding." But we shall not meet with this spirit any where but in the way of obedience: the knowledge of Christ, "and the keeping of his commandments, must always go together, and be mutual causes of one another." * * * *

"All the books and writings with which we converse can but represent spiritual objects to our understandings; which yet we can never see in their own true figure, colour, and proportion, until we have a *divine light within to irradiate and shine upon them*. Though there be never such excellent truths set down in words and letters concerning Christ and his Gospel, yet they will be but unknown characters to us, until we have a *willing spirit* within us, that can decipher them; until, by secret whispers in our hearts the same Spirit, which at first indited them, become a commentary upon them." (See an excellent Sermon by Cudworth on 1 John ii. 3. 4. in the late Bishop Jebb's *Piety without Asceticism*;—a most valuable work, as every thing is which Bishop Jebb put forth.)

(P. 136.) *An introductory dispensation*—a "*commandment going before*" to lead the way.]—ἐντολή προαγωγή. See vii. 18.

(P. 137.) *Sunk at length into dissolution*.]—ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ, ver. 13. There is an illusion here possibly, as in several parts of the Epistle, to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, as predicted by our Lord. See particularly ch. x. 25. ("And so much the more, as ye see the day approaching:") and ver. 37, ("Yet a little while, and he that is coming will come, and will not tarry.")

LECTURE VIII.

THE SANCTUARY, SACRIFICE, AND TESTAMENT OF CHRIST.

HEB. ix.

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; (for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world:) but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ver. 24—26.

WE are instructed, in the foregoing part of this Epistle, that we have in our Lord Jesus Christ “a minister of the sanctuary,” or true celestial tabernacle, “which the Lord pitched, and not man.” We are taught, also, that the ordinances of the Jewish tabernacle were chiefly valuable, as “serving for an example or shadow,” a copy, or adumbration, “of heavenly things¹,” “according to the pattern which was showed to Moses in the Mount;” the Mosaic covenant being, in fact, but a temporary one, introductory to the everlasting cove-

¹ Ch. viii. 5.

nant of justification and sanctification, of pardon and holiness, of mercy from God and obedience from man, of which Christ is the Mediator. The superiority of this new or Christian to the old or Jewish covenant, has already occupied our attention in discoursing upon the eighth chapter of this Epistle; we have now to recur more particularly to the doctrine, that the Jewish tabernacle, with its ministry and ordinances, was only a temporary type of heavenly things to come, prefiguring, as we have said, that *celestial sanctuary*, which Christ has entered as our Mediator, and that *all-sufficient sacrifice*, which he alone could offer for our sins.

To enter satisfactorily on this subject, we must pause a moment, and recall to mind what the Jewish tabernacle was. By referring, then, to the book of Exodus, you may find that the people were directed

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second vail, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that bud-

to make for the Lord a *sanctuary*¹, or holy place, in which he might dwell among them by visible tokens of his presence, and in which he might also be worshipped with certain ordinances of divine service expressly appointed by himself. The *form of the sanctuary* was to be that of a tabernacle or tent, made after a pattern shown to Moses in the Mount; and with so mysterious an exactness were the whole tabernacle, and every thing belonging to it, to be constructed,

¹ Exod. xxv. 8.

that the pattern, as well as the place and use, even “of all the instruments thereof,” was most carefully prescribed. This sacred tent or tabernacle, “this worldly sanctuary,” as the Apostle calls it, thus erected and furnished under God’s especial direction, was divided into *two parts*. In the *first* were placed the *golden candlestick*, with its “seven lamps¹” burning continually², and the table with the *shew-bread* upon it, consisting of twelve loaves, answering to the twelve tribes of Israel, which were presented there every Sabbath, in the presence³ of God, as a memorial of the continual dependence of his people on his providence, and more particularly of his miraculous support of them by manna during their journeyings in the wilderness. This first part of the tabernacle is called by St. Paul, the sanctuary or holy place. At the entrance of it was a magnificent: “hanging⁴” or curtain; and at the other end, a “second vail,” separating the outer part of the tabernacle from the inner, which latter was called the holy of holies, the most holy⁵, or holiest of all. Here, “within the vail,” were placed the *golden censer*⁶, in which the high-priest offered incense on the great day of expiation, and the *ark* containing the ten commandments. Here was also the golden pot that had the *manna*, which Moses had been commanded to lay up before the Lord, to be kept for future generations⁷; and similarly preserved was *Aaron’s rod*⁸ that budded,

ded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. ver. 1—5.

¹ Exod. xxv. 37.

² Exod. xxvii. 20. Lev. xxiv. 4.

³ Exod. xxv. 30.

⁴ Exod. xxvi. 36.

⁵ Exod. xxvi. 33.

⁶ Lev. xvi. 12.

⁷ Exod. xvi. 33.

⁸ Numb. xvii. 10.

by which he was declared to be the chosen priest of God ; besides the *tables of the covenant*, already noticed, as laid up in the ark : whilst over the ark, upon the *mercy-seat* or propitiatory which covered it, two “*cherubim of gold*”¹ stretched forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings. Here² it was that the Shechinah or Glory of God manifested itself, and that God communed with Moses from between the cherubim, which were therefore called the cherubim of glory. Of all these mysterious appendages of the tabernacle, it would be interesting to have received that typical explanation, of which the Apostle seems to intimate they were capable. But he has forborne to speak of them severally ; his argument requiring him to confine himself more particularly to the circumstances connected with the priesthood of our Lord, and especially with his heavenly sanctuary and all-sufficient sacrifice.

Where the Apostle and other sacred writers have been silent, it is not possible for us, on such a subject, to speak with certainty : yet, from the exactness prescribed to Moses, it is scarcely to be doubted that almost every thing connected with the form and furniture of the tabernacle had a prospective, emblematical reference to particulars in the Gospel economy. Whether the complete discernment of this wonderful resemblance be intended for men or for angels, and, if for men, whether it will ever be vouchsafed to mankind in this world, or reserved for a better being, it is not for us to say. In humility, however, and with reverence, we may be allowed to suggest applications,

¹ Exod. xxv. 17, 18.

² Exod. xxv. 22.

which, without being insisted upon as evidences for the conviction of the unbeliever, may prove to the Christian no unprofitable help to a *devotional* view of that "worldly sanctuary" which Moses was commanded to erect. Observe, then, that in the first or outer sanctuary, as here noticed by St. Paul, there were the candlestick with its seven lamps, and the table with the shew-bread upon it. In the former, may we not discover an apt emblem of that light of the Gospel, kindled by the sevenfold¹ Spirit of God, which was given expressly not to be "put under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house"² of God? Continually is it shining throughout the seven days of the week in the Church of Christ, for the benefit of all who are honestly disposed to make the word of God "a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their paths." And on the seventh day, from Sabbath to Sabbath, it sheds its light still more abundantly, in the earthly sanctuary, upon the Christian congregation, to guide our steps to heaven, our true "holy of holies." In the shew-bread, again, "or bread of the presence," as it is called, the offering by which Israel acknowledged before God their thankfulness for all their sustenance, and especially for the manna from heaven, may we not trace some intimation of that offering which Christians are expected to make of themselves as one bread? (for, to use the words of the Apostle, "we being many are," or at least ought to be, as "one bread, one body".³) As such, then, Christians, when they meet together on the Sabbath, and still more when they meet together as communi-

¹ Rev. i. 4.² Matt. v. 15.³ 1 Cor. x. 17.

cants, should offer themselves up, body and soul, before God, in acknowledgment of his numberless mercies for the support both of their souls and bodies; and, above all, in acknowledgment of that true bread from heaven, that bread of life, which Moses gave not, but which God has given us in his blessed Son¹.

Within the veil, in the holy of holies, were the golden censer, the ark of the covenant, containing the tables of the law, and covered with the mercy-seat, the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded.

From the censer, in which incense was offered by the high-priest, our thoughts are naturally led to the mediation of Christ, which alone gains acceptance for our prayers, when he presents them for us before God, as the incense. The ark of the covenant, with the mercy-seat or propitiatory upon it², the decalogue within, and the glory of God above, may remind us of the merciful covenant to which God admits those that lay hold of the sacrifice of Christ, who is expressly set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood. This gracious covenant is a covenant of pardon³, but at the same time of obedience³, and so of glory. There is no obedience without pardon; nor pardon unaccompanied by obedience: our consciences must be purified from the works of death, before we can serve acceptably the living God; and the very purpose of our forgiveness, is to enable us to lead a new life, and so prepare for glory; that, being freed from sin, and made the servants of God, and having his laws written upon our hearts, we may have our

¹ See John vi. 31—35. 48—51.

² Exod. xxvi. 34.

³ See Lect. VII.

fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. So that, in the "ark of the covenant," we have the whole of the new covenant, as it were, emblematically set before us:—our justification or pardon in the mercy-seat upon the ark, our sanctification in the law within, our glorification in the Shechinah above.

The golden pot of manna should seem to be interpreted by St. John the Divine, of the blessed enjoyments of the life to come, when man shall eat angels' food, and be capable of happiness like theirs. For to him that overcometh, in the various temptations to which he is exposed during his Christian probation, our Lord promises to give to eat of the hidden manna.

In all these articles, the censer, the ark, and the pot of manna, there is mention of *gold*, as if to point out to us the exceeding preciousness of those blessings and promises, which the superabundant grace of God has given us in Christ Jesus our Lord; for far more precious than gold which perisheth, yea, than thousands of gold and silver, are the mercies which we obtain through our Lord's mediation, which are secured to us in the new covenant, and which we hope to enjoy in the world to come.

Of the *rod of Aaron*, it may be difficult to speak; and yet, in the budding of a rod, whose vegetative life was gone, do we not behold an apt emblem of that restoration to life, that resurrection from the dead, by which Christ proved himself to be our accepted High-Priest with God, and which, as our High-Priest, he is ready to bestow upon all those who depend on his blood, and walk by his Spirit? But I forbear: these, as I have said, are only devotional interpretations, which, however useful, the most pious are at liberty to

reject, as not being directly founded upon any express authority of inspiration. But to some it may be both interesting and profitable, to trace such intimations of Christianity in the services of the tabernacle, and to find the law, through all its ordinances, speaking, in the ear of faith, the language of the Gospel. But I return to things more certain, as being interpreted by Inspiration itself.

The first circumstance thus noticed by the Apostle, is the entrance of the high-priest alone once a year into the holy of holies. For when the tabernacle was erected, and furnished in the manner already described, the priests were in the habit of entering continually into the outer sanctuary, or first part of the tabernacle, for the purpose of performing the regular services of the Mosaic ritual. But into the second part, or inner sanctuary, the holy of holies, no ordinary priest could ever enter, but the high-priest alone, and that only on one occasion in every year, that is, the great "day of atonement¹," when he entered not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.

Now herein were two remarkable circumstances typified or shadowed; for, first of all, by this veiling of the inner sanctuary, the Holy Ghost signified, that the way into the holiest of holies, was not yet made manifest, while the first ta-

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high-priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: ver. 6, 7.

The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest,

¹ Exod. xxx. 10. Lev. xvi. 30.; xxiii. 27.

bernacle was yet standing. The doctrine of immortality was not fully brought to light until the

while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: ver. 8.

Gospel came. It was *implied*, but not *revealed*; heaven was intimated, but not disclosed; the Jewish worshipper knew of the existence of the holy place; but a veil hung over its entrance, and the way to it was as yet shrouded in mystery. The price, in fact, of our admission to glory had not yet been paid; the sins which excluded us from heaven had not been atoned for. All that the Jewish taber-

nacle, with its ordinances, could do, was to furnish a secular type or figure, for the time then present, both of heaven, and also, in the second place, of the way by which we have access to heaven; the one in its inner sanctuary, the other in its gifts and sacrifices. For these latter were but types, having in themselves no atoning efficacy, no

Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. ver 9, 10.

power to purify the conscience, or to obtain with God the acceptance of the soul. They were simply of a ceremonial character, affecting the outer man, combined with various enactments, having reference only to distinctions between meats and drinks, to ablutions of the body, and other ordinances of the like carnal or corporeal character, until the season should arrive for setting all things right, by removing these outward shadows, and introducing, in their stead, the spiritual realities, of which they were but temporal and temporary figures. This was the great end of the Mosaic ritual. Its *chief value* consisted in its *typical* character.

But when Christ came, as our High-Priest in the ministration of good things to come, to bestow upon men, not ceremonial advantages, but everlasting salvation, it was by that greater and more perfect tabernacle, of which we have previously spoken¹, not made with human hands², or belonging to this lower creation at all; nor was it, as in the case of the Jewish high-priest, by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own precious blood, that he discharged the mysterious office, and entered in, once for all, into the holy place, that is, into heaven, after having obtained for us, by his death, eternal redemption. For if the blood of brute animals, and the ashes of a dead heifer, were allowed, by God's express institution, to have a sanctifying efficacy, so far, at least, as the ceremonial pollution of the flesh was concerned, how much more shall the blood of Christ, of him who is one with God, and who, by his eternal Spirit, living, though dead, quickened in spirit, though put to death in the flesh, at once the Sacrifice and the Priest, offered himself up without spot to God;—how much more shall that precious blood, so unspeakably pure and holy, and offered up by such a High-Priest, purge even the inmost conscience from the guilt and stain of sin, so far as to

But Christ being come an High-Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ver. 11-14.

¹ See ch. viii. 2.² See ver. 24.

admit the otherwise polluted, excluded, and dying offender into the holy, gracious, and saving service of the living God?

Thus did Christ become our High-Priest, by discharging the real functions of that sacred office, as typified in the Jewish tabernacle; thus did he open a way for us into the true holy of holies, and become the Mediator of that New Testament, in which he has bequeathed to us the promise of eternal life. The

Jewish high-priest was a kind of mediator between God and his worshippers; but only in a secular

and very imperfect sense: Christ

is the true Mediator typified in

Aaron and his successors; the Me-

diator of a New Testament, ren-

dered necessary by the imperfec-

tion of the old; the Mediator, who,

redeeming us by

his death from the transgressions from which, under

the first testament, no justification was provided, has

purchased to himself the right of dispensing grace to

fallen man, and giving to all who are called into his

Church the promise of the eternal inheritance. This is

the glorious reversion, the invaluable bequest, which

our dying High-Priest and Mediator has left to his

Church in his Will or Testament given us in the

Gospel, as expressly recorded in that Book, which we

therefore entitle, most appropriately, "THE NEW

TESTAMENT OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS

CHRIST." He died first to obtain forgiveness of our

sins; he then left us, at his death, the bequest of life

eternal. For, as the Apostle ar-

gues, a will or testament implies,

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. ver. 15.

For where a testament is, there must also

of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ver. 16—23.

which was in due time to be provided for purification in heavenly things; when Christ should enter for

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the

of necessity, the death of the testator. It is otherwise of no force. Had not Christ died, we could not have looked for the inheritance under his testament. Accordingly, it is worthy of remark, that even the first testament (that type of the second) was not dedicated without blood. At its fruit promulgation, the book which contained it, and the people who received it, were both sprinkled with blood; which was, therefore, called, expressly, "*the blood of the Testament* ¹." With blood, too, was the tabernacle sprinkled, together with all the vessels of the ministry; and almost all things were, by the law, purged with blood, and without shedding of blood was no remission extended to the Jewish worshipper. True, it was but "the blood of bulls and of goats" with which these patterns or types were purified: but herein we see a clear intimation of that better Sacrifice, that most precious blood, which was in due time to be provided for purification in heavenly things; when Christ should enter for us into the true sanctuary of God in heaven, in the immediate presence of the divine glory, and "by his

¹ Ver. 20.

one oblation of himself once offered, make a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice" for the putting away of sin.

true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ver. 24—26.

It was necessary, then, that Christ our High-Priest, the author of the New Testamentary Covenant, by virtue of which we inherit eternal life, should die; but it was not necessary, it was not

possible, that he should be holden of death. Our Mediator with God ever liveth to intercede for us in heaven: and as the high-priest returned to the people from the holy of holies, so will Christ return from heaven to his expect-

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. ver. 27, 28.

ing Church: and as man, on account of sin, must once die, then wake to judgment, so Christ, as man, died once for sin, not his own, but those of many others, and unto them that look for Him he will appear again, without sin or sacrifice, unto salvation.

May we, my brethren, find *that*, the second appearance of our Lord, at the judgment day, to be, in our own case, unto salvation! But will it, of necessity, be followed by such a happy result to every one of us? The question is most important, and as such deserves your most serious consideration. If not *saved* when Christ shall appear to judge the world, we know how awful the alternative will be; how wide the difference between those on the right, and those on the left hand of the Judge; how opposite the destiny of him who

shall have improved his talents, to that of the unprofitable servant; how impassable the gulph between Lazarus and Dives. Reflect then, I pray, each one of you, how the case may stand with himself: call to mind what you have now heard; remember that you live no longer amidst the types and shadows and mystical intimations of the Jewish Tabernacle, but amidst the substantial realities of the Gospel, surrounded with the clear light of God's full revelation, that, in this Gospel revelation, the Son of God is manifestly set before you as offering up himself to be the sole and sufficient sacrifice for the expiation of your sins; that with this one all-sufficient sacrifice he has, as our High-Priest with God, entered into the true sanctuary of the divine glory, that is, into heaven itself, and made a way for us to follow him; that, when he had thus died, and by his death obtained our admission into heaven, he bequeathed to his followers in the New Testament a promise of that eternal inheritance—a promise, my brethren, but no actual possession, unless you comply with the will of the Testator, as laid down in that Testamentary Covenant which he has left with his Church. The *promise* is given to all you who are called; but the actual *possession* of the inheritance is secure only to those, who answer to the character required by the Mediator of the Testament. What, then, is this character? where are we to learn, and how are we to acquire it? It is to be learnt, as I have already intimated, from the written Will of the Testator, from the pages of the New Testament. Look into God's Word; examine yourselves by that faithful mirror, especially by the New Testament, and you will there see what manner

of men you are by nature, and what manner of persons you ought to be by grace, if you would really attain to the heavenly inheritance, and abide the scrutiny of your Lord's return to judgment. To go no farther than the chapter which we have now been considering, do we not here observe how distinctly, how emphatically we are taught, that there is no entrance into the holy heavens but by the blood and mediation of Christ, and that eternal life is his free bequest, consequent upon his precious death? What, then, does this imply? What else, but that we are, before God, guilty beings; and that for our guilt we cannot atone by any merit in our obedience, or any depth in our repentance, but that blood must be shed, without which there is no remission; and *that* the blood not of brute animals, nor yet our own, but the blood of him who by the Eternal Spirit offered himself, immortal yet dying, without spot unto God. What ground is here, my brethren, for humility, as regards ourselves; for gratitude, as respects our Lord! Renounce, I pray you, as you value the New Testament which Christ has sealed with his blood, all dependence upon any natural or acquired merit of your own, for your *title* to the heavenly inheritance. Your sole title is the sacrifice of the death of Christ: on that alone must you depend for the acceptance either of your persons or your services. The Testament of Christ is sprinkled with his blood; and so also must his people be. The tabernacle of Christ, his heavenly and glorious tabernacle, is also sprinkled with his precious blood; and not only so, but all the vessels of the ministry: every part of the Christian's service and obedience, religious, social, or personal, must thus be purified, before it can

be acceptable to God. Such, I again urge you to keep in mind, such is your only title to admission into heaven. But can this title be pleaded alike by all? No! my friends. Mistake not so the teaching of the Apostle. There is a wide distinction between *merit* and *meetness*: the one you *cannot*, the other you *must* have in yourselves. The promise of the inheritance is not sure alike to the penitent and the impenitent, to the believing and the unbelieving, to the obedient and the disobedient. Far be from us so fatal a perversion of the unmerited grace of Christ. Only observe the language of this very chapter. The blood of Christ was shed (as we are told at the fourteenth verse) to purge your consciences from dead works, that is, from the works of disobedience which tend unto death, that you might serve the living God. Your Saviour died not only to put away the guilt of sin, but to destroy its power; to ransom you at once from the condemnation and the thralldom of your transgressions. Your High-Priest and Mediator is also your Judge: He has told you himself, how he will judge you, even according to your works done, or not done, in love to his Name: and to those only who look for him as their future Judge, who set the Lord always before them, who make his will their rule of life, and are learning to "love his appearing" as the great consummation of their hopes—to them only has he promised, when he returns from his celestial sanctuary, to appear again to salvation.

Rest not, then, in a *vague* dependence on the blood of Christ: make it, indeed, the foundation of all your hopes; but see that your faith be such as purifies your conscience from the deadly works of sin to serve the

living God. It is such believers only that our Lord will hereafter acknowledge. "Depart from me" is the awful sentence which He will pronounce on them that work iniquity. The blood that *pardons, purifies* also : and blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God in his holy of holies.

Before I conclude, I would address, to those who are now about to partake of the Lord's Supper, a word or two, more immediately suggested by our present subject : or rather, I would remind them of the solemn words used by our blessed Lord himself at his first institution of this holy sacrament. "This," said Christ, as he gave the cup to his disciples,—“ This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins ;” that is to say, as often as ye drink of this cup, ye are to do it in remembrance of Christ, to consider it as a solemn memorial and pledge of his love in dying for your sins, that so He might, in the New Testament of the Gospel, bequeath to you eternal life. It reminds you at once of the ground of your hopes, of the purity to which you are called, and of the inheritance in heaven to which you should be continually pressing on. A proud communicant, trusting in his own merits, not in the blood of the testament ;—an unholy communicant, converting the purifying blood of Christ into an excuse for sin ;—a worldly-minded communicant, drinking of that cup solely for secular purposes, or to maintain a character in society ;—each and all of these descriptions of Christians are guilty of dishonouring their Lord, and are but deceiving themselves. May God preserve us from such danger, and give us grace now to approach the holy table with a humble dependence

But when Christ came, as our High-Priest in the

But Christ being come an High-Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ver. 11-14.

ministration of good things to come, to bestow upon men, not ceremonial advantages, but everlasting salvation, it was by that greater and more perfect tabernacle, of which we have previously spoken¹, not made with human hands², or belonging to this lower creation at all; nor was it, as in the case of the Jewish high-priest, by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own precious blood, that he discharged the mysterious office, and entered in, once for all, into the holy place, that is, into heaven, after having obtained for us, by his death, eternal redemption. For if the blood of brute animals, and the ashes of a dead heifer, were allowed,

by God's express institution, to have a sanctifying efficacy, so far, at least, as the ceremonial pollution of the flesh was concerned, how much more shall the blood of Christ, of him who is one with God, and who, by his eternal Spirit, living, though dead, quickened in spirit, though put to death in the flesh, at once the Sacrifice and the Priest, offered himself up without spot to God;—how much more shall that precious blood, so unspeakably pure and holy, and offered up by such a High-Priest, purge even the inmost conscience from the guilt and stain of sin, so far as to

¹ See ch. viii. 2.

² See ver. 24.

admit the otherwise polluted, excluded, and dying offender into the holy, gracious, and saving service of the living God?

Thus did Christ become our High-Priest, by discharging the real functions of that sacred office, as typified in the Jewish tabernacle; thus did he open a way for us into the true holy of holies, and become the Mediator of that New Testament, in which he has bequeathed to us the promise of eternal life. The Jewish high-priest was a kind of mediator between God and his worshippers; but only in a secular and very imperfect sense: Christ is the true Mediator typified in Aaron and his successors; the Mediator of a New Testament, rendered necessary by the imperfection of the old; the Mediator, who, redeeming us by his death from the transgressions from which, under the first testament, no justification was provided, has purchased to himself the right of dispensing grace to fallen man, and giving to all who are called into his Church the promise of the eternal inheritance. This is the glorious reversion, the invaluable bequest, which our dying High-Priest and Mediator has left to his Church in his Will or Testament given us in the Gospel, as expressly recorded in that Book, which we therefore entitle, most appropriately, "THE NEW TESTAMENT OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." He died first to obtain forgiveness of our sins; he then left us, at his death, the bequest of life eternal. For, as the Apostle argues, a will or testament implies,

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. ver. 15.

For where a testament is, there must also

ut, quemadmodum Apostoli fuerunt in eo studio parci, nimietatem in eo evitemus." Witsius, Diss. de Tabernac. Myster. cap. ii. and iii. Misc. Sac. tom. i.

(P. 147.) *Of the rod of Aaron.*]—The typical application here given, the writer does not recollect to have seen, excepting in a work written chiefly for children, by one who will readily forgive the plagiarism. See "The Young Christian's Sunday Evening," (by Mrs. Parry) vol. ii. Fifteenth Sund. Even.—The reference may serve also to detect one or two more thefts of the same description.

(P. 148.) *Intimations of Christianity.*]—*ὑποδείγματα*, ver. 23.

(P. 148.) *Erected and furnished.*]—*κατεσκευασμένων*, ver. 6.

(P. 149.) *Not fully brought to light.*]—*φωρίζω* (see 2 Tim. i. 10.) signifies rather to throw light upon objects already in some degree known, than to "discover anew." On this subject, see Mr. Davison's "Discourses on Prophecy," Disc. IV.; in which, moreover, are some admirable remarks on the light thrown upon the *types* by the Gospel. To the Jew "the sense of the types," he observes, "was a *latent* one."—"It is Christ who holds the keys of the types, not Moses."—"They are like things opaque in themselves, which waited to shine by the reflection."—"The 'dumb elements' are made animated and eloquent when the Truth comes to act upon them with its light. They are like the statue which had its cords wrought within, but mute till the morning sun struck upon them."

To these remarks I would only add, that there seems to be generally among writers on the subject of the religious views entertained by *pious* men of old, an inadvertency in not distinguishing the dispensation of the *law*, strictly so called, from the *rest* of the religion of the Jews, derived from the patriarchs, or added by the prophets. The *promise*, even that to Abraham, was given more than four centuries before the *Law*; which was only, as one of the Fathers observes, *parenthetical* between the promise and its fulfilment. (See Gal. iii. 17—19.) The Gospel began, in a manner, to be preached even in Paradise: the blood of "the Lamb slain" in the divine counsels "from the foundation of the world," was available, by anticipation, to the earliest believers in the Promised Seed. "The just" in all ages have "lived by faith," (see Lect. X. and XI.) which carries

a man's thoughts with "confidence" into futurity, and his convictions into the world unseen, (ch. xi. 1.)

(P. 149.) *The time then present*, ver. 9.]—Or "the present season" of this life: both significations are included in the exposition; but the former seems more strictly accurate, as opposed to the Gospel "season of setting all things right" (καιροῦ διορθώσεως) mentioned ver. 10.

(P. 150.) *By a greater*, &c. ver. 11.]—Rather, "by the greater," τῆς μεζονος, already spoken of, ch. viii. 2.

(P. 151.) *Thus did Christ*, &c.]—It is remarkable, with reference to a doctrine to which some seem to be so particularly attached, as scarcely ever to preach a sermon without introducing it—the doctrine, I mean, of "the imputed righteousness," or rather, the *imputed obedience* of our Lord—that, in this whole Epistle (and the same might be said of almost all the Epistles), there is not an expression, which can be even *forced* into that sense; but that the Apostle, in quoting a passage which might seem, at first sight, to look that way (see ch. x. 7, &c.), is careful to explain it as applying solely to the *death* of Christ, "the offering of his body once for all." It was "by his *blood*" that our High-Priest "entered into heaven for us," and made a way for us to follow him. *That* is the only meritorious ground of our admission, noticed by the Apostle. We inherit under the will of our *dying* Lord.

Why, if not from some unconscious love of novelty or singularity, divines or preachers should adhere so fondly to questionable opinions, rather than dwell on the plain, substantial, undisputed verities of the Catholic faith, unless it be that such opinions are regarded among their religious friends as a distinctive shibboleth, or received by their congregations as pledges of their belonging to a favoured class or party, I know not: but this, I fear, is manifest—that the continual and peremptory inculcation of doctrines, which, even if capable of being proved from Scripture, are, to say the least, very sparingly and obscurely taught there, is not the most scriptural mode of instruction, but one which has a tendency both to distract the Church of Christ, and also to throw into the shade, if not to bring into doubt, the undeniable truths of the Gospel, when thus found perpetually blended with less certain matter. To

my brethren in the ministry, I venture, with all humility, yet with great seriousness, to submit these considerations. There are many very valuable "labourers in the vineyard," whose usefulness is unquestionably impaired by their disproportionate zeal for opinions, such as I have described, doubtful at best, if not altogether unscriptural.

(P. 151.) *Redeeming us—from, &c.*—“for redemption from the transgressions,” (εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν παραβάσεων, ver. 15.) from which the Law could neither justify (*Acts* xiii. 39.) nor deliver (*Rom.* vii.)

(P. 152.) *Better sacrifices.* ver. 23.]—“The one sacrifice of Christ, by which heaven is opened, being here meant, to give dignity to that sacrifice, the plural is used instead of the singular,” (see ch. x. 12.) Macknight. The sacrifice of Christ is the consummation of all other sacrifices; whatever *any* of them professed to do, was really accomplished by that.

(P. 153.) *Testamentary Covenant.*]—*διαθήκη*. It is at once a Testament and a Covenant, the *bequest* being *conditional*: for, if we would inherit the promises, we must answer to a certain description contained in the Testament; so that “a solemn vow, promise, and profession” is required to be made, confirmed, and frequently renewed on our part, as well as a bequest to have been made by our Lord; and thus the Testament becomes a Covenant.

LECTURE IX.

EXHORTATION TO SINCERITY, AND PERSEVERANCE IN THE FAITH.

HEB. X.

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. ver. 22, 23.

ALREADY, in the ninth chapter of this Epistle, has our attention been directed to the heavenly sanctuary, the precious sacrifice, and the dying testament of our everlasting High-Priest Jesus Christ. We have now, my brethren, in dependence upon divine grace, to proceed, under the direction of the Apostle, to a practical application of our belief in these important truths. But first, we must, with the Apostle, pause awhile, to reflect once more upon the *perfect sacrifice* for sin which Christ offered on the cross, and to *contrast* it with the imperfect sacrifices offered under the law. For the tabernacle being, as we have seen, but a temporary figure of the Gospel economy, presented,

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can

never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. ver. 1—4.

in its various ordinances, only a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things. To Christ's eternal sanctuary, and infinitely precious sacrifice, what, indeed, on earth, what else in the whole universe, could really be like? The rites of the law were mere adumbrations or shadowy resemblances, furnishing an obscure outline, not a distinct picture or reflection, of the realities of the

Gospel. Having no atoning efficacy of their own, but only a prefigurative value, the legal sacrifices were repeated, even the chief of them, continually, year after year; the repetition clearly proving how unfit they were to purify the conscience from sin, of which, in fact, they served only to keep up a constant remembrance, leading men's thoughts, or at least their hopes, to some better expiation, to be in due time provided for "the sins of the world."

To these hints of the law, as to the imperfection of

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt-offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not,

its expiatory sacrifices, there were further added, in the course of time, the clearer intimations of prophecy. In the 40th Psalm, for instance, Christ, by the mouth of David, condemns the legal sacrifices as in themselves unacceptable to God, prophetically announcing his incarnation, when he should come (as the whole volume of prophecy testified of him) to execute

the solemn contract entered into with his heavenly Father, and to obey perfectly the will of God, even though, for the satisfaction of the divine law, it should be necessary to present, in his own body on the accursed tree, a dying sacrifice, without spot or blemish, for the accumulated transgressions of an offending world. This is the true expiatory offering which the rites of the law foreshadowed: this that obedience unto death to the will of God, by which we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. For that offering needed not, like the unavailing sacrifices of the law, to be repeated; but completing at once our redemption, it was straightway followed, on the part of the great High-Priest who offered it, by his ascension into glory, preparatory to his final triumph. We have, then, in the Psalms, a direct prediction of the abolition of the legal sacrifices as imperfect, as soon as the perfect sacrifices of the Gospel should have been introduced in their stead; of the departure of the shadow, when the substance itself should have come. The same is also intimated in the prophecies of Jeremiah, where forgiveness of sins is expressly stated to be a part of the new covenant which was to be established; for, the pardon of sin

neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. ver. 5—9.

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. ver. 10—13.

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after

be acceptable to God. Such, I again urge you to keep in mind, such is your only title to admission into heaven. But can this title be pleaded alike by all? No! my friends. Mistake not so the teaching of the Apostle. There is a wide distinction between *merit* and *meetness*: the one you *cannot*, the other you *must* have in yourselves. The promise of the inheritance is not sure alike to the penitent and the impenitent, to the believing and the unbelieving, to the obedient and the disobedient. Far be from us so fatal a perversion of the unmerited grace of Christ. Only observe the language of this very chapter. The blood of Christ was shed (as we are told at the fourteenth verse) to purge your consciences from dead works, that is, from the works of disobedience which tend unto death, that you might serve the living God. Your Saviour died not only to put away the guilt of sin, but to destroy its power; to ransom you at once from the condemnation and the thralldom of your transgressions. Your High-Priest and Mediator is also your Judge: He has told you himself, how he will judge you, even according to your works done, or not done, in love to his Name: and to those only who look for him as their future Judge, who set the Lord always before them, who make his will their rule of life, and are learning to "love his appearing" as the great consummation of their hopes—to them only has he promised, when he returns from his celestial sanctuary, to appear again to salvation.

Rest not, then, in a *vague* dependence on the blood of Christ: make it, indeed, the foundation of all your hopes; but see that your faith be such as purifies your conscience from the deadly works of sin to serve the

be the divine mercy) the glorious God is accessible to fallen man : yea, so abundant is the reconciliation obtained for us by Christ, that we have not merely access, but boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

When he died on Mount Calvary, the veil of the temple, which concealed the holy of holies, was rent in twain; and that sacred place, the worldly symbol of heaven, became open and accessible : whereby was intimated to us the

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; and having an high-priest over the house of God ; ver. 19—21.

new and living way into the celestial sanctuary, which our Lord had at that very moment consecrated for us by his sacrifice on the cross, through an infinitely more costly veil, that is to say, through his own immaculate flesh, which had concealed for awhile his divine majesty, but through which, when wounded and torn for us upon the cruel cross, the mercy of God beamed forth in all its fulness, to encourage our approach to the glory of heaven. Nor is this all. Christ has, as we have said, rent in twain the veil which separated us from the mercy-seat. He rent in twain upon the cross that veil of flesh which, before he became man, stood between us and our God. And now, the veil being removed, we may, by faith, behold him in the true holy of holies, a High-Priest over the house of God, ever pleading our cause, and able, by his presence, to complete our salvation :—to deliver us entirely from guilt, from sin, and from sorrow. By his death and mediation he is the truth, the way, and the life, the one and only true way to life eternal.

By this way, then, this new and living way, let us draw near with a true heart, honestly confessing to God our sinfulness, and sincerely desiring his favour: then will there be afforded to us, through Christ,

*Let us draw near
with a true heart,—ver.
22.*

abundant access to peace here, and hereafter to glory. The pardon of sin is in Scripture connected with sincerity of heart: “Blessed,” saith the Psalmist, “is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is *no guile*.” We must deal truly with God, if we desire his forgiveness. We must not attempt (what is, in fact, impossible) to deceive him by a mere show of religion, nor yet by indulging only in vague and verbal confessions of our iniquity, nor again by striving to appear better before him than we really are. By such a course we may fatally delude ourselves, but cannot deceive God. Let us draw near, then, not only with outward reverence (although that is indispensable), nor only with solemn confession and prayer, (although these too are necessary); but, in addition to these, let us draw near also with a true heart; cordially desiring the mercy which with our lips we implore, feeling in our breasts the sinfulness which in words we acknowledge; not content with styling ourselves, in the general, miserable sinners, or bemoaning in the mass our natural corruption, but calling to mind, soberly and carefully, our particular offences and individual propensities to evil. Then shall we really feel our obligations to Christ’s atonement, our need of his mediation; then shall we draw near to God, as Israelites indeed, as guileless Christians, with true hearts, and not only with our lips.

To such only can this new and living way, through the crucified flesh of the Son of God, be really acceptable. They who feel their own particular sinfulness, can alone either appreciate its value or understand its meaning.

The true heart, then, with which the Apostle exhorts us to draw near to God, implies a sincere desire of the divine forgiveness, with a feeling, yet sober consciousness of our need of it, and, I may add, an unfeigned intention, by God's grace, to forsake our sins: in one word, it is the heart of the truly penitent; of those who know their sins, who lament their sins, and do all they can to forsake their sins.

But some one, perhaps, may say, How can we who are by nature corrupt, and by habit, it may be, offenders against God, how can we draw near to God? Where shall we find the power? I answer—*The power is conveyed in the command.* God himself calls you in his holy word; he bids you draw nigh; and therefore, assuredly, he puts it in your power to do so. An all-wise and gracious God could not invite us to do what he knows to be impossible. It were a cruel mockery of our misery, with which it were blasphemy to charge our God. When Christ directed the man with the withered hand to reach it forth, did he allege his inability, and complain that our Lord commanded what was impossible? Had he done so, his hand would have continued in its withered state. But he was wiser and humbler, than thus proudly to plead his own weakness in opposition to an express invitation of mercy. This must also be our course in regard to the weaknesses and disorders of the soul. Where the invitations of God's word are clear and general, it is pride

alone which raises difficulties from our own corruption. We look too much to ourselves, instead of humbly and thankfully depending upon him who invites us, to enable us to obey the invitation.

As God then, by his Apostle, has mercifully called us to him, let us draw near, if any be afar off, and if any be near, let us draw nearer still, in full assurance of faith, with an entire and complete dependence upon the mercy of God in Christ, upon the willingness of the Almighty to pardon and receive us, as well as upon the abundant sufficiency of our Lord's atonement to make a way for us to the divine favour. Let us draw near, I say, *in faith*; not trusting in any fancied innocence of our own, nor yet in the sufficiency of our penitence to expiate our offences, but trusting for pardon of our sins, and acceptance even of our services, solely to the blood of Christ; having by faith our hearts sprinkled, as it were, with that precious blood, and thereby delivered from the sense of unpardonable guilt and helpless frailty, which would otherwise drive us from our Maker's presence. The dependence of every Christian on the atoning blood of Christ for acceptance with God is strongly set before us, at our very first admission into the Christian Church, in the holy sacrament of baptism. We had then our bodies washed, or, if not washed, at least sprinkled (which in its emblematical purport is equivalent) with pure water, to signify that sprinkling from an evil conscience of original and actual guilt, which we need in our hearts. This is the very thing, I say, signified and pledged to us in our baptism,—

—*in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. ver. 22.*

remission of sins through the blood of sprinkling, which is the blood of Christ. In the case of infants, such remission can extend only to their original guilt; and so far we believe them to partake of the blessing. But, my brethren, when we come to an age to think and act for ourselves, so as to be responsible to God for our principles and conduct, our case is widely altered. We then, in many things, offend *all*; and *some*, alas! there are who offend altogether, in not even *attempting* to lead a life of Christian faith and holiness. In the case then of adults, the washing of baptism will cease to be of any avail, except to increase our condemnation, if it be not followed by a truly penitent heart, by faith in the atonement, by the inward sprinkling, in short, of the conscience. Then, indeed, our admission into the Christian Church by the waters of baptism will, through the resurrection of Christ, become a means of our salvation, if thus accompanied by the answer of a good conscience towards God. But this leads me, my Christian brethren, to the second part of the Apostle's application of the doctrine now before us; I mean the earnest admonition to persevere in the Christian faith.

The Hebrew Christians, as I have before had occasion to remark, were in peculiar danger, from the persecutions which they met with from the unconverted Jews, either of relapsing again into Judaism, or, which was fully as dangerous, of so perverting Christianity, in accommodation to Jewish prejudices, as to deprive it of its fundamental truths, especially those relating to the divinity of Christ and the atonement of the cross. We, as Christians, are undoubtedly placed under *different* circumstances; but not, it may be, under cir-

cumstances *less hazardous* to our salvation. Our temptations and trials are altered, but not removed; our dangers are changed, but, probably, not diminished. The spiritual warfare may have assumed a new aspect; but there are still the same enemies to contend with; still the world, the flesh, and the devil, combined in fearful alliance against the peace of our souls; and still then, both individually as Christians, and collectively as a Church, do we need the Apostle's stirring exhortation:—"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering."

In addressing to you, my friends, this admonition of the Apostle, I speak to you as at least *professors* of the faith and hope of the Gospel: of faith in a crucified Redeemer, and of hope, through him, of life eternal. Such is, avowedly, the common faith of us all, the professed hope of the whole country. But alas! how many are thus professors of the truth, whose words and actions are utterly at variance with such a profession! how many, who do not even pay outward respect to the religion of Him, by whose name they are called! who habitually neglect at least public, if not private prayer, never open the word of God, take no part in extending his kingdom, but to all appearance live without any serious acknowledgment of his creative power, providential rule, or saving mercy! To such the exhortation to hold fast their profession would be misapplied: they have not even a *profession* of religion, to which we can admonish them to adhere. If in this assembly there should happen to be any thus habitually negligent of all religion, they must be exhorted not to hold fast, but to *renew*, their profession of the Christian hope and faith; to begin almost

entirely afresh ; both outwardly and inwardly. True it is, that if, at the baptismal font, their bodies have already been sprinkled with pure water, the outward rite of baptism need not be repeated. They may still reckon upon the *promises* of help and pardon then visibly signed and sealed to them. But the *vows* of their baptism are altogether to be renewed ; repentance, faith, and obedience, are to be begun again ; they have still to labour in the very foundations of the building, which they ought to have been raising long ago, but which they have so unhappily and so grievously neglected.

Of others who *do* make a profession of religion, and who *are* in the habit of frequenting the public worship of God in the Christian congregation, we are bound in charity to hope better things. To charge any man with hypocrisy, unless upon the strongest evidence of deliberate inconsistency between his profession and practice, were at least harsh and uncharitable, if not an arrogant assumption of the prerogative of Him, who alone knoweth the heart. At the same time, without uncharitably charging with hypocrisy any of you, who present yourselves here as Christian worshippers of God, I may be allowed to warn you seriously of the necessity of examining yourselves, before God and your consciences, whether you be really in the faith. And this self-examination, I would farther remind you, involves two questions: first of all, whether the faith you profess be *truly the Christian faith* ; and in the second place, if it be the true faith, whether you profess it sincerely with a *true heart*. You need not be told that, under the title of Christian, modes of faith are professed (and that, it may be, in sincerity)

which are not truly Christian, inasmuch as they reject some of the fundamental truths of the Gospel. Such, for instance, is the Socinian, or, as it is unfairly called, Unitarian creed; which rejects the divinity and, with it, the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, as well as the hereditary corruption of our fallen nature. You must, then, try and examine your profession, and see that it embraces the fundamental verities of the Gospel, such for instance as our Fall in Adam, our consequent proneness to evil, our original and actual guilt, the remedy provided for us through the incarnate Son of God, the gift of his Holy Spirit to renew us again after the image of God, and, finally, the hope of glory held out to the penitent, obedient believer in Christ, for the merits and through the mediation of his Lord.

But a *true faith* may be professed, as I have intimated, yet not *truly*. It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness; and it is with a true heart only, not with the bare utterance of the lips, that we can draw near to God. Take heed, then, lest any of you be deceived into a dangerous security, either by a profession of that which is *not* the true faith, or on the other hand by a *mere* profession of that which *is*. Let your profession be at once sound and sincere, scriptural and cordial.

With this caution, I proceed to urge upon those who are sound and sincere in the faith, the Apostle's admonition to *hold fast* the same without wavering.

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.) ver. 23.

Many temptations, my brethren, will occur, as you pass through the world, to shake your faith; perhaps persecution in some of its indirect forms of worldly

dislike or hindrance, perhaps ridicule, perhaps pleasure; or it may be, the force of custom may set itself against the commands of God, the opinions of the world against the doctrines of Scripture, or your own misgivings may tempt you to unbelief. One or more of these causes may combine, or others may arise, to draw you away from the hope of the Gospel, and to lead you to give it up, in weakness, impatience, or despair. But, remember, He is faithful who, at his death, promised to his followers eternal life: the testamentary covenant, in which he has bequeathed the inheritance, is sealed with his own blood, the blood of the Son of God. If we have been reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his living for us in heaven. Though the glorious possession is withheld for the present, yet, rest assured, it is only till you are meet to enjoy it, only till you are prepared, by previous discipline on earth, to partake of that blessedness, which unsanctified spirits could not taste, nor earthly minds appreciate.

Instead, then, of halting through unbelief, or drawing back in despair, study, rather, to promote not only your own perseverance in the faith,

but that of others also. Let us consider one another how much we need each other's assistance in

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. ver. 24.

this difficult work: consider too the influence which your station, or circumstances, or connexions in life, may give you over your relatives or friends, your neighbours or acquaintance, or it may be over a still wider portion of society; and let this influence be used, with Christian consideration and prudence, for the furtherance of the eternal welfare of those who are mem-

bers together with you of the body of Christ. Above all consider the force of your example ; and let it ever operate to the stirring up of those around you to add to their faith, charity, or Christian love, and to charity, those labours of love and other “good works,” in which true charity will ever more or less abound.

As an important means of edifying both yourselves and others in practical piety, be especially careful in your observance of the Lord’s Day, and of the custom of assembling ourselves together in the House of God for the mutual encouragement of your faith and the continual rekindling of your devotion ; not omitting this important means of grace, as the manner of some is, in proportion as they advance to maturity, or grow in manhood, but adhering to it with greater earnestness, and improving it with increasing care, as the time passes, and ye see the day approaching when every thing but religion shall have lost its value, when death shall have prepared the way for judgment, and judgment shall fix us for eternity.

The faithfulness of Christ, and the continual approach of judgment, are both momentous arguments for perseverance in Christian piety. To these add the awful consequences of *apostasy*. True it is that *open* apostasy is in these days less common and less likely, than in those days of persecution, in which the Apostle found it necessary to caution the Hebrews against it. But even in these days there is such a thing as infidelity. And what is more alarming is, that infidelity is an evil of which men appear to be growing less afraid, and less ashamed, daily. *Virtual* infidelity

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is ; but exhorting one another : and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. ver. 25.

there will indeed always be, where sin is knowingly allowed to take possession of the heart. For there is an apostasy of the heart as well as of the lips; a man may practically abandon his religion, without *openly* renouncing it; and this abandonment of the Gospel, if persisted in, will prove as certain, although not so daring, a cause of perdition as the other. Either is a rejection of Christ and his cross; the one directly, the other in effect. And if we thus sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, where shall we look for expiation? To whom shall we go from Him, who hath the words of eternal life? To what other atonement shall we fly? Or on what reasonable grounds can we hope to escape the vengeance, which justly awaits an obstinate opposition to such overtures of mercy as are made to us through Christ? Listen to the fearful warnings addressed by St. Paul to those who wilfully persist, whether by word or deed, in renouncing the Gospel. The Christian atonement being rejected by them, “there remaineth,” saith the Apostle, “no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” of Christ. “He that despised Moses’ law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. And

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth, &c. ver. 26—31.

again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Beware, then, of so awful a conclusion of your spiritual career, as either an open or even a practical abandonment of your religion, a direct or indirect denial of your Lord, would be. Beware, I say, of such a conclusion : and if of the conclusion, then of all approaches to it, all advances, especially all wilful advances, in vice or irreligion, or even in sin and thoughtlessness. Great dangers have but small beginnings ; and the ruin even of the most desperate sinners has been brought about *gradually*. See then that, instead of going back, you go forwards ; for this is the only sure way to hold fast your profession. The time may have been, when many, who are now

But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions ; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions ; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. ver. 32—34.

departing daily farther from God, entertained better thoughts. Time certainly was, when they were dedicated to Christ in baptism with the intention that the rest of their lives should proceed according to that beginning : and time, I say, may have been, even long after the period of infancy, when better thoughts were entertained. For though none of us may, like the Hebrew convert, since we came to a knowledge of the Gospel, have endured for it either affliction or reproach, nor yet have submitted to the loss of worldly prosperity for the sake of treasures in heaven, and then have been in danger of apostasy, there may yet be many who are now worse than once they were :—many who were piously brought up, but who have since learnt to make

light of religion, and to stifle convictions, under the influence of profane society or of worldly temptations. Oh ! let such “call to remembrance the former days ;” let them think of the beginning once made, if not in their education, certainly in their baptism : let them reflect too, before it be too late, on the value of the promise made to the persevering Christian, who, confiding in his Saviour’s blood, shall fight manfully, under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and continue Christ’s soldier and servant unto his life’s end.

Cast not then away your confidence, or, in other words, your open and resolute profession of the Gospel, which hath in heaven a great recompence of reward, an ample compensation for any trials at present to be undergone. Christ first did and suffered the will of God, before he entered into glory ; and we must follow his example, if we would partake in his exaltation ; patiently doing and enduring the will of God, if we would receive the promise.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. ver. 35, 36.

And then remember, how short the time is through which we have to persevere : short, perhaps, in every sense of the word to many of us ; and short, as compared with eternity, to all. For yet a little while, and the promise shall be fulfilled : and Christ will come from heaven to receive to himself his faithful followers. Let not your faith in Him fail, because he now seems as it were to tarry, for he will not

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith : but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition ; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. ver. 37—39.

tarry long. Hold fast, then, the profession of your hope without wavering. By faith the just shall live through all his trials; and for want of it the backslider shall perish. May we not be of them that draw back to the loss, but of them who believe to the gaining, of the soul! If indeed we have fallen back, as too many, as more or less all of us, have; then let us hasten to rouse ourselves afresh, and return to the Father of mercies before it be too late, and henceforth, by divine grace, persevere earnestly and stedfastly in such a sanctifying dependence on the sacrifice of Christ, as shall lead us to his presence on high, and make us partakers of that everlasting "inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away," which is "reserved in heaven for them who, by the power of God, are kept through faith unto salvation."

LECTURE IX.

Hebrews x.

NOTES.

(P. 164.) *Volume of prophecy.*]—See Bishop Horne on *Ps.* xl. where also may be found a valuable *note* on the expression, “a body hast thou prepared.”

(P. 165.) *The solemn contract.*]—See Hammond on *Ps.* xl.

(P. 165.) *Satisfaction of the divine law.*]—See Expos. of the Ep. to the Rom. Lect. V. notes (p. 98.)

(P. 165.)—*We are sanctified through the offering.* ver. 10.]—Bishop Lloyd, in his Oxford edit. of the New Testament, adopts the reading ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμεν οἱ διὰ τῆς προσφορᾶς; which Bishop Middleton (in his work on the Greek Article) translates “*we of the sacrifice,*” &c. are [or rather, *have been*] *sanctified*; illustrating it by *Rom.* ii. 27. τὸν διὰ γράμματος. It is possible, however, that the οἱ crept in by inadvertence in transcribing: ασμενοι, just before, might easily lead a transcriber to write εσμενοι; and another, unable to reconcile οἱ to its place, might put it, as in some copies, before ἡγιασμένοι. Griesbach omits it altogether.

(P. 166.) *Virtually a denial of the only and all-sufficient sacrifice.*]—Such are masses and the doctrine of transubstantiation.

(P. 166.) *To be abolished.*]—ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ, viii. 13.

(P. 166.) *Invitation to draw near.*]—Addressed, perhaps, more particularly to the unbelieving Jews; as ver. 23, &c. is to the believing: excepting that “sprinkled” and “washed” (in the Greek) are both in the past tense, signifying the “having been” thus privileged. Some put a colon after “conscience;” which gives great emphasis to the exhortation:—“Let us,

having had our *hearts* sprinkled, &c., draw near with a true *heart*, &c.; and having had the body washed with pure water" at our first *profession* of the faith, "let us hold fast the *profession* of our hope."—(Most copies read "hope," not "faith.")

(P. 170.) *Full assurance of faith.* ver. 22.]—i. e. with a full confidence (see ver. 19) in God's readiness, through Christ, to forgive and receive us; not in our own irreversible election, or infallible perseverance. Had those been the points of which, in St. Paul's opinion, the Hebrews ought to have been fully persuaded, he would never have written this letter expressly to warn them of the danger of apostasy, after they had suffered so much for the Gospel.—See particularly ver. 34, 35.

(P. 176.) *The day approaching.*]—Possibly (for I think it is questionable [see 1 Cor. iii. 13.] but possibly) St. Paul alluded primarily, both in ver. 25. and 37. to the approaching destruction (which took place about twelve years later) of Jerusalem, with the temple and all its services: but that was but a type of "*The Day*" (of judgment), to which it is that we must now look.

LECTURE X.

CONSTANCY IN THE FAITH ENFORCED BY EXAMPLES.

HEB. xi. 1—16.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ver. 13.

AMIDST the trials of this probationary being, which more or less await every Christian in his passage through it to eternal glory, some powerful principle is evidently necessary, to enable him patiently to endure until all his trials shall be at an end. That principle, the Apostle has told us, is faith. “The just shall live by *faith*.” And again, “We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that *believe* to the saving of the soul.” This faith, necessary to final perseverance, St. Paul charitably presumes to be the ruling principle of all to whom he is writing. Lest, however, the language of kindness and affection should lull the Hebrews into a false security, or in any way cause them to relax in their piety, the Apostle proceeds immediately to set before them what it is to

live by faith; that so they might judge whether they were really doing so or not. Thus would we also act, in humble imitation of the apostolic example, towards the congregations to whom we preach: we would speak the language of charity; yet far be it that our expressions of charitable hope should lead any one astray into self-delusion. To guard against so fatal a result, let us, with the Apostle, consider well the nature of that principle, by which we shall live unto righteousness, that so, by viewing ourselves in the mirror of God's word, and comparing ourselves with the examples of faith which that word presents, we may both learn what a living faith really is, and be animated to a patient perseverance therein to our eternal salvation.

What, then, is the Apostle's account of faith? "Faith," he says, "is the substance," the ground, or confidence)—in other words, it is a confident persuasion—"of things hoped for," (or expected) "the evidence," (or conviction) "of things not seen."

It is not, observe, the mere circumstance of being numbered amongst the people of God: that places men within the sound of the word; but, if the word be not heard, or read, or attended to, clearly there is no faith, no substantial confidence or conviction, but ignorance, and that of the worst kind—darkness in the midst of light.

Nor again does faith consist in the mere rehearsing of creeds, however orthodox. Men may do this without understanding, without, perhaps, acknowledging them, and certainly without feeling the truth and value of what they say. Confession is made with the mouth; but it is in the heart that we believe. The act of the

tongue, unaccompanied by concurrence of the inner man, is not faith, but formality.

Faith, then, is something beyond either *profession* or *confession*. First of all, *as opposed to present experience*, it is, as already stated, a confident, well-supported substantive persuasion of things expected, whether good or evil; of a heaven, for instance, for the righteous, of a hell for the impenitent. It makes what is *future* practically present; so far as to give it a serious influence upon our passing conduct. Men may entertain a *notion* of a world to come, without living for it; but they cannot have a lively or living faith, without being influenced by it in their practice: at least, such perversity would indicate wickedness of the most desperate character, a corruption of heart more than human¹. It is want of faith, which in general leads to the neglect of the great future. Observe how the case stands as to the futurities of *this* life: in regard, for instance, to the reversion of an earthly possession. How do men act who confidently expect a valuable inheritance? Do they not live with a view to it, form their plans accordingly, wait patiently, and keep up their spirits under hardships? Is it thus you feel and act, my Christian friends and co-heirs in the Gospel, in regard to your spiritual expectancies, your hope of an inheritance under the testament of Christ? If not, you have still to pray for, and still to cultivate, the faith, of which we are now speaking, as essential to salvation.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,—ver. 1.

¹ “The devils believe and tremble.” *Jam.* ii. 19.

This principle is farther defined to be, *in opposition* —the evidence of things *to sight or sense* generally, an evidence in the soul, or conviction of things not seen. The objects of faith are partly future, and altogether invisible. They are “not seen,” at least, “as yet,” however brightly they may hereafter shine forth, when we shall be made capable of seeing what is spiritual, yea, of beholding God himself in his glory. Now alas! we are the creatures of our carnal sense: what we see, and hear, and handle, and feel, we believe, and, naturally, little else, but what is the subject either of sense or of consciousness. Faith gives us, as it were, a new sense; making what is unseen to be visible to the soul, though it be but “as through a glass, darkly.” Let us apply this test as we did the other. Let us ask ourselves, which world we are living for, the visible or the invisible? What things do we chiefly “look at?” those which are seen and temporal, or those which are unseen and eternal? An honest answer to this inquiry would determine for us, whether or not we have that faith, which is the conviction of things not seen.

From the *nature* of faith, let us proceed, under the Apostle’s guidance, to the *examples* of its living efficacy, with which the history of the church was so richly furnished, even then, when the Apostle wrote, before the martyrs and confessors of the New Testament were added to the spirits of just men made perfect. For by such a principle it was that, even from the first, righteousness was achieved;—by such a principle as faith is described to be, that the elder

*For by it the elders
obtained a good report.
ver. 2.*

saints in the patriarchal and succeeding times obtained a good report, yea, a divine testimony in their favour.

The foundation of religion, and therefore the first act of faith, is the recognition of a

Divine Maker of heaven and earth:

—the acknowledgment that this world, and all other worlds, sprang into being at his Almighty fiat.

The effect of such a faith is, that

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. ver. 3.

it will lead us to make the universe a temple, to reverence the hand of God in all things, to attribute to him all our blessings with all our trials, and to remember continually that the things which do appear are but effects of the invisible First Cause. This principle of faith has been common to all pious men in all ages; yet, although acting from a common principle, they have differed from each other in exemplifying its practical effects, and hence it is that the examples of the righteous stand forth in Scripture as instances more especially of this or that particular part of piety. For, to an influence in particulars, the general acknowledgment of God will, if practical, necessarily lead.

By faith *Abel*, for instance, was enabled to offer unto God a more acceptable sacrifice

than Cain; a sacrifice “more excellent” in itself, as being “of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof,” and as such, apparently, costing him more than “the fruit of the ground” would have

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. ver. 4.

done. It was, it should seem, a richer offering than Cain's, implying a grateful conviction of the goodness of the invisible God, and a confident expectation of

his mercy. But this was not all: the sacrifice of Abel derived its chief excellence, probably, from being a sacrifice, or (to speak more strictly) from being the offering of a *slain victim*, and, as such, typical of the great Sacrifice for sin, which was, in the fulness of time, to be offered up by the Promised Seed. It was peculiarly in the province of faith to keep up a "confident expectation" of the future Deliverer of mankind; and surely it was only faith in an express appointment, that could have led to the adoption of animal sacrifices as an offering acceptable to God, when as yet the slaying of beasts for food was not permitted. Prompted by any other feeling than that of obedience in faith to a divine direction, the shedding of blood on the altar of the Most Holy must have proved offensive; but, resulting from a well-grounded faith, it became an act of enlightened piety, a confession of guilt, a testimony to that important truth, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission," a type (and, be it observed, the first type) of the great atonement,—the Lamb thus typically "slain from the foundation of the world." By faith in the promises of God, thus exhibited in the extent and character of his religious service, as opposed to the grudging rationalism of Cain, Abel incurred, it is true, the fatal envy of his brother, but obtained, at the same time, a blessed testimony¹ from God, that he was righteous—an acquitted suppliant, an accepted worshipper. He fell a martyr to his faith, the victim of unbelieving malice: but, though dead, he is not forgotten. His history ends not with his life on earth.

¹ See Gen. iv. 4.

“Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” The righteous, however persecuted and cut off, “shall be had in everlasting remembrance” before God. The blood of Abel crieth from the ground, and the Almighty himself takes up his cause; thus clearly teaching us, that, although Abel was slain, he still lived to God, happy in the divine favour, “where the wicked cease from troubling” any more the faithful worshipper. How forcibly did such an example speak to the Hebrew converts, and encourage them to perseverance in the faith of Christ, notwithstanding the opposition or hatred of their unbelieving *brethren*! yea, how forcibly does it “still speak” to all Christians! how clearly does it intimate to us the connexion which has ever existed between faith and patience, the necessity of persevering in a right faith, if we would be accounted righteous before God, and, in particular, the importance that our devotional services should spring from faith, and be ever animated by this humble, but holy principle! As there can be no practical religion without devotion, so will there be no acceptable devotion unaccompanied by an acknowledgment of our guilt, and our dependence on the promises of God in Christ for its remission. Even Abel did, in all probability, make such an acknowledgment, and express some such dependence: how much more should we! True it is, we offer up no sacrifices beyond “the calves of our lips,” and the “living sacrifice” of our own selves: but we have continual opportunities of keeping up, in the faithful celebration of the Lord’s Supper, the “perpetual memory” of that great sacrifice on which all our hopes depend. What Abel prefigured, we may commemo-

rate. May we ever so commemorate it in the spirit of the faithful Abel, as with him to be accounted righteous, and, when we are dead, to be remembered with profit by our fellow-servants, and by our God with mercy!

The example of Abel is followed by that of *Enoch*. In one we behold the influence of faith in

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. ver. 5, 6.

producing acceptable worship; in the other, its power and value as leading, through a holy life, to a heavenly reward. For it was by faith that Enoch was translated, so as not to see death, and was no longer to be found on earth, exposed to the persecutions of an “ungodly¹” world: it was by faith; for he had received testimony of being well-pleasing to God, which, without faith, is impossible. Men may please each other by mere moral virtue, without religion; but it is impossible to please God without believing in his existence, and practically regarding him as a Rewarder of them who diligently seek him. It is faith in a gracious God that draws men nigh to him in devotion and obedience, and brings Him nigh to them in blessing; so that, in the language of Scripture, man is said to walk with² his Maker in a humble but heavenly “communion.” May we exemplify in ourselves this holy and elevating effect of faith!—we, to whom the way of access to the Father has been so fully declared. Reconciled through his Son, and led by his Spirit, may we ever delight in “seeking dili-

¹ Jude 15.

² Gen. v. 24.

gently" by prayer his heavenly grace, by holy meditation in his word the knowledge of his will, by humble obedience to his laws his gracious approbation; and may he ever be with us to hold up our goings in his paths, that our footsteps slip not!

In *Noah* we see faith exhibited by obedience to the warning of God, in opposition to the example of the whole world.

They perished for want of faith, waiting for the evidence of their senses: he, convinced, upon the divine authority, of the approach of a deluge, which he did not see till a century more had elapsed,

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. ver. 7.

was filled with holy fear and circumspection, and prepared the ark, in which both he and his family were eventually saved:—thus condemning the world by his example, and receiving for his own blessed portion, that high privilege of being esteemed righteous in the sight of God, which the faithful, and they alone, are appointed to inherit. "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he. And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation¹." Would we attain to the same inheritance? would we be accounted righteous before God, and be so declared at the final separation of the just from the unjust? Then let us remember, that a life of faith is indispensable to our justification with God; and let no taunts, no sophistry, no evil example of the world, turn us aside from this only way of

¹ Gen. vii. 1.

righteousness and salvation. According to all that the Lord reveals or commands, so let us believe and do, and we are safe: any other course, how numerous soever its advocates, must end in ruin.

We come next to that eminent example of faith—the patriarch *Abraham*. We be-

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ver. 8—10.

hold him, in whose steps we must follow if we hope to inherit the promises of the Gospel, acting continually by faith in all his varied trials. What, for instance, enabled him to leave his country at the divine bidding, and to follow implicitly into a land of which he was utterly ignorant? Or what, when he reached that land, made him live in it patiently as a sojourner, dwelling with his family (the heirs

with him of the same promise) in tents, without so much of the land in actual possession “as to set his foot on¹?” Surely it was faith, which taught him to look so confidently to the ultimate fulfilment of the divine promise, and to raise his expectations beyond things present and visible, beyond Canaan and its towns, to the eternal city planned and built by God, that sacred community, that spiritual heritage² among the nations, to be begun upon earth but consummated in heaven, of which he was constituted heir.

To the example of Abraham is joined that of *Sarah*,

Through faith also Sara herself received

who by faith became in her old age the mother of the “child of

¹ Acts vii. 5.

² Rom. iv. 13.

promise," and, through him, of that numerous elect nation amongst whom Christ was to arise.

strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. ver. 11, 12.

All these distinguished saints of God closed in faith their earthly career; leaving us an example that we should follow their steps;—an example, which will appear the more forcible, if we reflect that they had not actually received the promises, as we have received them distinctly announced to us in the Gospel. They beheld them only at a distance, in the dim futurity; yet on these indistinct and remote intimations of future blessings did they choose rather to fix their affections, than on the present mercies which they enjoyed, and which they were willing to regard only as foretastes, as pledges,

as types, of something better to come. Yea, obscure as were the revelations made to them of the heavenly inheritance, they were persuaded of them, and gladly embraced them, and confessed themselves to be upon earth but as strangers and pilgrims, journeying on to another and a better home. For such was the language of Abraham to the children of Heth, as also of Jacob to the King of Egypt; and by it they plainly declared, that they sought still some other country beyond the land of Canaan;—a country distinct also from that which they had left, and to which they

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. ver. 13—16.

might, if they had chosen, have returned. But it was a "better" home on which their hopes were fixed, a spiritual, a "heavenly" one. This from the first has been the great hope of the faithful. And hence it is, that we find them ready, as Abel was, to die in maintaining the true worship of God; as Enoch, to depart and be with God; as Noah, to separate himself, when necessary, from all the world; or, as Abraham and his family, to be but sojourners in the land promised to their children.

Such are the worshippers, whom God seeketh;—such the believers, in whom he delights. He is not ashamed to be called their God, and, as such, to bestow upon them exceeding great rewards. A merely carnal faith it were below the spiritual Majesty of God to receive; and none but earthly blessings it were alike unworthy of him to bestow: but those who are willing to look beyond such things, and to renounce all worldly enjoyments in the hope of something higher, He is not ashamed to call his people; nor will He fail to reward them with that eternal blessedness, which faith hath led them to aspire after. For "He hath prepared for them a city," in which they shall be for ever happy, with no more trials to endanger their faith, nor any further delays in the fulfilment of his promises.

Here we must pause for the present, and briefly consider, in conclusion, the force of the appeal to these holy examples in regard to the Hebrew Churches, and its application to ourselves.

The object of the Apostle being to animate the Hebrews to perseverance in the faith, notwithstanding the many afflictions in which it might involve them, what could be more apposite than to show, from their

own Scriptures, that true piety had always been content in this life to meet with trials, and to look beyond it for rewards. Abel's reward was in another world; in this he was murdered for his piety: so also was Enoch's, who, whilst on earth, seems to have been exposed to violent opposition from "ungodly sinners," and to have been ultimately taken away, perhaps, that they might not find him, to wreak upon him their unholy vengeance. Noah had, doubtless, much to endure from a wicked generation during the time that he preached to them; but he persevered, and obtained the crown of righteousness. Abraham and his family never arrived upon earth at their promised home.

But as to the Hebrew Christians, so to ourselves also are such examples full at once of admonition and encouragement, that we too may observe and remember, that the great object of true religion has *ever* been to raise men above this world, and to prepare them for another; to lead them through affliction to eternal glory; by teaching them to "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal," intended only to answer an ulterior purpose; "but the things which are not seen are eternal."

LECTURE X.

Heb. xi. 1—16.

NOTES.

(P. 184.) “*Substance*” or *confident persuasion*.]—See note on ὑπόστασις, ch. i. ver. 3.

(P. 185.) *Things expected, whether good or evil*.]—ἐλπίζομένων: see Scapula.

(P. 187.) *A richer offering*.]—πλείονα.

(P. 188.) *From being a sacrifice*.]—Θυσίαν. — δι’ ἧς (sc. θυσίας, that being the nearest antecedent,) ἔμαρτ. εἶναι δίκαιος, God testifying of his gifts, bearing witness to his acceptance “on the ground of (ἐπὶ) his gifts.” In this view of the typical character, and therefore divine origin of the primitive sacrifices, I have the misfortune to differ from individuals whose names I venerate; but it is in company, I believe, with the great majority of divines. To use the words of Dr. Hawkins: “After weighing the opposite improbabilities in either scale, I know not how to ascribe to unassisted human thought the original invention of a sacred rite of such extraordinary significance, and connected afterwards under Noah and Moses most clearly and undisputably, by the Holy Spirit himself, with the great fundamental verity of the Christian faith.”—See “Discourses, by the Provost of Oriel, on the Historical Scriptures of the Old Testament,” p. 151.

(P. 188.) *Though dead, he is not forgotten*.]—ἐτι λαλεῖται, (see Marg. Tr.) The signification of the other reading is also given.

(P. 190.) *Enoch*.]—How far the mythological story of Gany-mede, whom Jupiter is represented to have taken up to heaven,

to be his cup-bearer (οἰνόχοος), may have been founded in some tradition of the history of Enoch (Heb. *χανωκ*), it would be interesting to know, if it were possible. The coincidence is remarkable.

(P. 191.) *Fear and circumspection.*]—ἐβλαβηθεῖς, ver. 7.

(P. 193.) *Closed in faith their earthly career.*]—Enoch did not *die*; though his translation, as regards this world, was equivalent to dying.

(P. 194.) *He hath prepared for them a city.* ver. 16.]—"Πόλις τινὸς enim Græcis dicitur *urbs patria in qua aliquis natus est* [sive renatus]. Hinc πόλις etiam nudè positum pro urbe *patria* apud Xenoph." Schleusner.—It is not the town merely, but the state (civitas) or community; and carries with it the idea of *home*.

LECTURE XI.

FURTHER EXAMPLES ENFORCING CONSTANCY IN THE FAITH.

HEB. xi. 17—40; xii. 1—3.

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.
xii. 1, 2.

WE have already, on a previous occasion, considered some of those eminent examples of faith, by which St. Paul endeavoured to animate his believing countrymen to a patient endurance in the faith of the Gospel. We now return to the interesting occupation: for many examples still remain to be considered, or at least to be adverted to.

In the first place, we have once more to contemplate that of Abraham: for of all examples of faith his is the most remarkable, and especially under
By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the

that severe trial, when he was called upon to offer up, with his own hand, his son Isaac, his only son by Sarah. Yet he did it, nothing wavering; *he*—who had received most precious promises to be accomplished in this very child, and which would be altogether frustrated by his death. Mysterious trial! “In Isaac shall thy seed be called”—“thy son, thine only son;” but “get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him up there for a burnt-offering.” Might not Abraham, both as a father and as a depositary of the promise, have argued against such a command with some appearance of reason, or, at least, with some excuse from those natural affections, and that abhorrence of inhumanity, which God himself had implanted in his breast? But we read of no complaints, no doubts, no hesitation. The command was explicit in its tenor, although mysterious in its bearings, and therefore, albeit his way was covered with clouds and darkness, the faithful patriarch follows implicitly where the word of God conducts him. He doubts not the power of God, in the greatest extremity, to perform what he had promised. He reckons that God can, if necessary, raise up Isaac again even from a state of death. True it was, no such instance had as yet occurred: but what can be impossible to the Almighty? Surely, rather than the divine veracity should fail, God “will shew wonders to the dead; and they shall arise and praise him. His loving-kindness shall be declared in the grave; and his faithfulness in destruction. Yea, his wonders shall be known in the dark, and his righteousness in the

promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead: from whence also he received him in a figure. ver. 17—19.

land of forgetfulness¹." Of such a character, we are assured by St. Paul, were the reasonings of Abraham: and from the dead did he figuratively receive his son. So far as the patriarch's obedience was concerned, Isaac was slain; in his restoration at the last, Abraham was graciously rewarded, not only with the immediate removal of his agonizing trial, but, perhaps, also with an emblematic prediction or prefigurative representation, in the case of Isaac, of the death and resurrection of the true Child of Promise, the Only-begotten of the Father, who should come in the fullness of time, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." That, even to Abraham, the offering-up and restoration of Isaac were, in some degree, typical of the sacrificial death and resurrection of the Son of God; that he then "saw the day of Christ," less distinctly, no doubt, than we do, yet saw it "and was glad²;" that the faith which was "imputed to him for righteousness" had, in this way, some direct reference to the great atonement, is, at the least, not improbable: but, be this as it may, to us the typical resemblance between the offering up of Isaac and that of Christ, as well as between the restoration of the former and the resurrection of our Lord, is clear and striking. In contemplating, therefore, the faith of Abraham, we shall do well to keep in mind, that "it was not written for his sake alone, that his faith was imputed to him for righteousness, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered because of

¹ See Psalm lxxxviii. 10, &c.

² John viii. 56.

our offences, and was raised again because of our justification¹."

Pursuing the stream of sacred history, we find *Isaac*, by faith in the revelations made to him, realizing to his mind, as if already present, the privileges of the two distinct nations who should descend from his two sons; *Jacob* also realizing, in like manner, the fortunes of his descendants, and marking out the peculiar circumstance, that from *Joseph* should spring two tribes, instead of one. For himself, he was old and weak, unable, without support, to hold up his dying frame, or to worship God with his wonted reverence of posture: but he saw that his posterity should possess the promised land; he saw too, and with devout thankfulness acknowledged, that although he was dying in Egypt, he should be buried in Canaan, in the burying-place of his fathers. It was the same principle of faith in the promises of God, which gave to *Joseph*, at his death, a full assurance of the return of Israel to Canaan; in the strength of which assurance he charged the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."

In the *parents of Moses*, we see a humble trust in God rewarded with the preservation of their child, notwithstanding the express edict of Pharaoh to the contrary; yea, preserved in

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. ver. 20—22.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child;

¹ Rom. iv. 25, &c.

and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. ver. 23—27.

the very palace of the king, and educated by his own daughter: so easily can the Almighty make the most untoward circumstances "work together," and the most unlikely means conduce "to the good" of his faithful servants! But the deliverance of *Moses* from an early death had well nigh proved the destruction of his soul. It at least brought upon him another danger, different from the waters of the Nile, but far more perilous; from which again it was only faith that saved him. For observe his circumstances: he was brought up

in a palace as the adopted son of the king's daughter, surrounded by the pleasures of a court, most of them, probably, in that idolatrous country, sinful in kind, and not only in degree. All this while, the people of God, to whom *Moses* by birth belonged, were suffering affliction in oppressive and ignominious bondage. To declare himself one of them, was to make himself a partaker in their sufferings: yet willingly did he give up all the sinful pleasures of a heathen court (pleasures which, he knew, could last only for a time), for the sake of suffering with the chosen, although afflicted, people of the Most High. Yea, willingly did he renounce all the prospects of wealth which opened upon him as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, for the sake of those far better prospects which he knew to be secured to the descendants of Jacob. Though, in order to have his portion in the blessings

which should come with the Promised Seed, it should be necessary to suffer reproach, and to be treated with contempt by the companions of his youth; yet welcome "the reproach of Christ," in preference to the treasures of Egypt. For assuredly God would not suffer his people to bear reproach in vain. There was a "recompence of reward," to which Moses looked as an abundant compensation for any sacrifices he might make of present wealth or enjoyment, in the service of God. Strong, therefore, in faith, he renounced the court of Pharaoh, yea, and forsook Egypt itself, notwithstanding the violent opposition of Pharaoh to his departure, involving, as it did, together with the loss of so distinguished and favoured an individual, the withdrawing of all the Israelites from under his dominion. But Moses looked not for encouragement to human favour, even from a throne, but to the Invisible King of kings, who by faith was ever present to his soul. He set the Lord always before him, because God was at his right hand; he was not moved by the threats of the obstinate and despotic Pharaoh.

Again, what was it but faith that saved *Israel*, in the observation of the Passover and the shedding of blood, from the vengeance by which the first-born of the Egyptians in every house were destroyed? Or what but faith that opened to Israel a path through the Red Sea? or that caused the walls of *Jericho* to fall down before Joshua? or that delivered *Rahab* from the general

Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after

they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab

perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. ver. 28—31.

But, as the Apostle observes, not only the limits of an Epistle, but time itself would have failed him, had

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, &c. ver. 32—38.

destruction which overtook her unbelieving countrymen?

he attempted to enlarge, with any thing like adequate justice, upon the praise and power of faith. The instances with which the Bible alone abounds of its efficacy, are almost innumerable. It was this holy principle that actuated Israel's worthies in every rank and station. It was through faith that their *Princes*, like David, subdued kingdoms, and obtained mysterious promises of a kingdom that should never cease¹; that their *Judges*, like Samuel, wrought righteousness; that their *Champions*, like Gideon and Barak, and Samson and

Jephthah, achieved the wonderful deliverances promised to them; that their *Prophets* endured so many trials, and experienced such miraculous escapes; stopping, as in the case of Daniel, the mouths of lions; or, as in that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, quenching the violence of fire; or, like Elijah, wonderfully escaping the persecuting sword. By faith, again, others, like Hezekiah, were divinely restored from the bed of sickness: and, throughout the long list of

¹ 2 Sam. vii. 13.

Israel's warriors, to what were they indebted for their valour and prowess, but to a humble and steady reliance, by faith, upon the arm of the Almighty? Such reliance as put the "sword of the Lord" into the hand of Gideon; or such as David expressed to the vaunting Philistine:—"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel." Nor was it to the bolder sex that the triumphs of faith were confined. By faith pious matrons, like those of Sarepta and Shunem, received their dead children restored to life again.

Such were, as we have just styled them, the triumphs of faith; its active achievements. But it showed itself in effects still more wonderful than these. The patience or suffering fortitude produced by faith is, perhaps, a more unequivocal proof of its power, than any achievements of active virtue, or any experience of extraordinary deliverance. Men may be brave and upright, victorious and fortunate, without faith; a sense of character, a love of glory, natural honesty, constitutional temperament, pre-eminent talent, or long experience, may lead to such results. But to suffer—to suffer, at least, willingly, for righteousness' sake, and in defiance of the world's opinion—to suffer not only cruelly but with ignominy—in one word, to suffer as a martyr in the cause of God, is that to which no earthly motive urges. But *faith* can brace the heart even to this. Supported by a lively dependence on the promises of God and the truth of his word, there were those in ancient times, as there have been since, during the Law as well as under the Gospel, who were tortured, not accepting deliverance, "that they

might obtain a better resurrection¹. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

Such are the glorious examples of faith, recorded for our admonition, either in the Old Testament or by uninspired Jewish historians:—examples, to most of which God himself has given testimony that they were righteous:—examples, too, of individuals who lived under imperfect dispensations of religion, not in that

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.
39, 40.

clear, distinct light of revelation which we enjoy, but at a time when the heavenly promises were "afar off," dimly discernible in the distance. If they lived by faith, when faith had so much less light to guide it, how much more should we, who have received the full revelation of the Gospel! We enjoy not the dawning privileges of the Old Testament, but the better things of the New; and being thus highly favoured, we may reasonably be expected to live accordingly. It would be a lament-

¹ "And when he was at the last gasp, he said, Thou, like a fury, takest us out of this present life; but the King of the world shall raise us up who have died for his laws, unto everlasting life." 2 Mac. vii. 9. "Fear not this tormentor; but, being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death, that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren." Ib. ver. 29. So fully were these Jews persuaded of a resurrection to come!

able inconsistency that faith should degenerate, as revelation has become brighter. Christianity was designed to be the perfection of religion; and Christians, therefore, should strive, if possible, to surpass the saints of former days, and draw still nearer to a perfect faith.

Pause, then, and consider. Look not at these instances with barren admiration; but let us also endeavour to be like them. Let us regard them as so many witnesses, by *their examples*, to the nature and power of that faith, by which we are to live here and to attain hereafter to life eternal;—as so many witnesses also of our exertions, a glorious crowd of *spectators*, surrounding, in their exalted amphi theatre, this earthly arena on which we are contending for the crown of life, and looking on with affection and concern, as we run the race that is set before us. Nay more, reflect, that, if we fail through unbelief, they will further be witnesses *against us* in the day of judgment, that it was not for want of example we failed, nor for want of light (for they themselves had less), but solely through our own wilfulness or neglect. If, on the other hand, we strive in our Christian race and endure unto the end, then, doubtless, they will be witnesses of our success, rejoice exceedingly in it, and receive us with gratulations, when the race is over, at the heavenly goal.

Roused, then, by the thoughts of such witnesses, let us lay aside the weight of worldly cares, which cannot but relax our progress; and, above all, let us cast away sin, which, adhering to the soul as a garment,

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. xii. ver. 1.

is sure, with its various folds, to twist itself about us ; or, as a net, to entangle us in its toils. We cannot retain a love of sin or of the world, and still hope to run with success our spiritual course : we must be divested of these impediments and incumbrances, or else our failure is certain.

But suppose you are thus sincerely engaged in the Christian race, weaned from sin, and willingly renouncing the world ; still remember that patience is necessary. A race implies exertion, continued exertion, yea, increasing exertion, (for that is one great peculiarity of a race, and a most appropriate feature in the comparison), exertion increasing to the very last. It is not enough to begin well, nor yet to go on well for a time, unless we endure to the end. Patient perseverance is indispensable. Beware, then, of backsliding ; take heed lest your faith fail you, and your patience be exhausted in the middle of your course. Look at the bright " cloud " of witnesses above you, who themselves have run the race already, and who are now rejoicing, with joy unspeakable, that they were enabled to do so. But, above all, " look unto

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. ver. 2, 3.

Jesus the Author and Finisher," the Guide and Perfecter, of the faith of the Church in general from the beginning to the end of time, and of your faith in particular, under whose auspices, and by whose help, you must both commence and end your course. Consider the succour he is able to give. The race is difficult and trying, to flesh and blood impossible : " through our

sins and wickednesses we are sore let and hindered in running" it. A sense of our danger should keep us continually "looking unto Jesus," and entreating Him, of his bountiful grace and mercy, to be among us continually, and 'with his great might to succour us,' until He shall have perfected in us the faith which He has begun. Consider too the example which our Lord has left us. His life upon earth was a life of affliction and persecution, of contempt and ignominy, such as the most violent opposition of "a wicked and adulterous generation" could heap upon him: but all this he endured for the sake of the joy that was set before him, as a glorious prize at the close of a painful struggle. The disciple is not above his Master; suffice it, if he be as his Master; if even, by painful perseverance in the faith, and a steady course of suffering and self-denial, he shall enter into the joy of his Lord.

In urging upon you, my Christian brethren, so fully and so earnestly, the necessity of faith, I am aware of the prejudices which the very mention of faith is likely to excite in the minds of many;—prejudices arising, partly, it may be, from the erroneous views which some Christians entertain, or the unguarded expressions which they use, respecting the nature and relative importance of faith; but yet not wholly to be thus accounted for. Such prejudices may also arise from want of sufficient attention to the subject, and also from that disinclination to scriptural piety, which is but too natural to the heart of man, and which both the world and the devil are too ready to cherish. Whatever be their origin, let not prejudices of any kind close your hearts against the truth. Even if truth has been abused, it must not, therefore, be aban-

Think not, then, of confining religion to cloisters, nor yet to churches; but carry your faith with you, yea, carry it in your hearts, wherever you go. In your closets, at your domestic altars, and here in the house of God, let it animate your devotions, as it did those of Abel, and gain them acceptance through the blood of Christ. In your daily conduct, let it lead you to walk with God, like Enoch, in the way of his commandments. In your intercourse with society, may it preserve you, as it did Noah, from the contagious example of thoughtless unbelief! In your trials, may it brace your minds, as it braced that of Abraham, to resolute self-denial and implicit reliance on the divine mercy! In temptations, may it defend you, as it did Moses, from the smiles, and raise you above the frowns, of the world! In a word, live by faith, such faith as St. Paul describes and exemplifies in this Epistle; and you will find it, under all circumstances, an *unfailing* principle of righteousness; as it is indeed the *only* principle from which genuine righteousness can ever spring. He is just with God, who lives by faith in his revealed will; and those who either neglect this faith, or who “draw back” from it, do so to their own perdition. O miserable end of unbelief! how unlike that blissful rest, and those crowns of glory, for which you have been this day exhorted to strive perseveringly in the race that is set before you by the Author and Finisher of your faith!

LECTURE XI.

Hebrews xi. 17—40; xii. 1—3.

NOTES.

(P. 200.) *Reasonings of Abraham.*]—λογισάμενος. ver. 19. So that the patriarchs did reason upon, and not confine themselves to the mere letter of, the truths revealed to them.

(P. 203.) *Recompence of reward*, ver. 26.]—μισθαποδοσίαν: see also ch. x. 35. Those, who object to the doctrine of rewards, should consider the force of the expressions used in Scripture: μισθός, which is the usual term, means “hire” or “wages;” μισθαποδ. payment of hire. Even humility may take a wrong direction.

(P. 203.) *The Invisible King.*]—τὸν ἀόρατον sc. βασιλέα, ver. 27.

(P. 204.) “*Obtained*” *mysterious “promises.”* ver. 33.]—It may also be meant that they obtained what was promised: which sense is likewise given in the Lecture.

(P. 205.) *A better resurrection*, ver. 35.]—Some divines seem to contend that the Jews, whether they did or not, *ought not* to have believed in a future resurrection to everlasting life. But it appears they did so believe, and are here commended for acting from such a faith.

(P. 206.) *Mockings and scourgings*, &c. &c. ver. 36—38.]—It was common, we are told (2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 16.) with the Jews to “mock” the messengers of God; old Eleazar (mentioned 2 *Mac.* vi.) was “scourged;” Micaiah and Jeremiah were “imprisoned;” Naboth and Zechariah (2 *Chron.* xxiv. 21.) were “stoned;” Isaiah is said to have been “sawn asunder;” Joseph was “tempted,” as were, in a different way, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; in the reign of Ahab, the prophets

of God were "slain with the sword," (1 *Kings* xix. 10.); and among destitute, hard-faring "wanderers," such as the Apostle speaks of, we find especially conspicuous the prophet Elijah.—Surely such men did not live for this world only? Then were they, with one or two exceptions, of all men most to be pitied. (1 *Cor.* xv. 19.) But in truth "this world was not worthy of them:" they lived above it; their country was "a better, that is, a heavenly."

(P. 207.) *Let us also.*]—καὶ ἡμεῖς, ver. 1.

(P. 207.) *A glorious crowd of spectators,*]—νῆφος, which I have afterwards applied also in its literal signification of a "cloud," illumined from above.

(P. 207.) *Sin with its various folds, &c.*]—I understand τὴν ἐνπλεκουσ. ἀμαρτίαν of sin generally, compared to a folding robe, or an entangling net.

(P. 208.) *Guide and Perfecter.*]—ἀρχηγός, ver. 2: see *Acts* iii. 15. "The Prince of life," ἀρχηγός τῆς ζωῆς, the Author of it; or, Our Guide to it; (see also *Heb.* ii. 10.;) as Joshua was to the Israelites into the Land of Promise.—Christ *began* the faith in Abel's sacrifice, and *finished* it in his own.

(P. 208.) *Endured the cross.*]—"A cross;" even a death by crucifixion.—Bishop Middleton.

LECTURE XII.

FURTHER REASONS FOR CONSTANCY IN THE FAITH.

HEB. xii. 4—29.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.
ver. 5.

FROM the tenth chapter of this Epistle (ver. 32, 33.) it appears that the Hebrew Christians had in former days, on their conversion to the faith, “endured,” for the sake of it, “a great fight of afflictions,” partly in being made themselves “a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions,” and partly in becoming the “companions of those that were so used.” St. Paul himself had most probably experienced their sympathy when in bonds at Cæsarea¹; and, for the sake of that “better and enduring substance in heaven” which he preached to them through Christ, they “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods” by their unbelieving countrymen. But great as were these afflictions of their “former days,” they were not all that they might be called upon to endure. They had not yet, as many other Christians had, “resisted unto blood” in their struggle with the wickedness of the world; and instead

¹ Ch. x. 34. comp. with Acts xxiv. 23.

of being prepared for this common trial, as it was then, of a Christian's faith, they seem to have relaxed from their former spirit of endurance, to have been ready to faint, and to have grown weary of the contest. They had forgotten, what even as Jews they should have remembered, it being the language of the Old Testament as well as of the New, that afflictions are to the children of God consequences of their heavenly Father's love, a part of that salutary discipline, to which the Almighty in his wisdom sees fit to subject "every son whom he receiveth," in order to convince us not only of our sins and follies, which in the hours of ease and prosperity we are too apt to make light of, but also of the vanity of the world, and the value of things invisible. Without this discipline of affliction, our faith, it should seem, would remain for ever defective; the evidence or conviction "of the unseen things" which belong to our everlasting peace, could hardly, if at all, be wrought within our souls. We must look, then, upon our afflictions as a necessary discipline for immortality; as proofs not so much, it may be, of the displeasure of God, as of his love;—the dealings, in short, of a father with his children. So strong is the Apostle's language, that he seems to speak of it as a fearful thing never to receive the chastisement of affliction;—a kind of intimation that we are not of God's family. Far then, from "despis-

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. ver. 4—8.

ing the chastening of the Lord," from making light of it as some do, or yet desponding under it as do others, the true Christian will "in adversity consider," and will moreover so value such correction, as to tremble at its entire absence, and to regard with suspicion a course of uninterrupted prosperity. Not that affliction is, *of necessity*, a proof of the divine favour, and therefore to be courted by us; or that the absence of it is a proof of wrath: all that we are justified in inferring from the Apostle's language is, that God does not afflict the children of men, and still less his children in Christ, willingly, but because affliction is necessary for our own advantage, (although of the time and form in which it is necessary, he alone is the judge;)—that his severest dispensations are intended for our good, and our worst external troubles, as has been well observed, but "blessings in disguise," the severer countenance of love.

If we look even to human parents, we find them, when really attentive to the welfare of their children, using correction, yet both expecting and receiving "reverence." They are not loved or obeyed the less, nor regarded as devoid of parental affection, because they may occasionally find it necessary to adopt painful discipline. Yet from them all that we derive is the mortal body. God

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. ver. 9, 10.

is the immediate Author of our higher nature, the Father of our immortal spirits. How much more then shall we submit with reverence to such correction, as he may consider necessary for our spiritual and eternal

“life!” For earthly parents (generally speaking) chasten their children only with a view to this short life, according to their various judgments¹, imperfect at the best, and often widely erroneous; but God corrects us for our everlasting profit, and that with such unerring wisdom, that, by his Spirit sanctifying our afflictions, we may become holy like himself, so as to be happy with him for ever.

It cannot, indeed, be denied that afflictive dispensations carry with them an appearance of severity, and that no chastening is found to be, at the time, a matter of joy, but of pain and grief. It is essential to its character that it should be so: it would cease to be corrective, if it were not painful. And yet the grievousness of affliction is often—per-

haps, to the right-minded Christian, it is always—much greater in apprehension than in experience; in appearance than in reality. The mist is denser to the eye, when viewed at a distance, than when

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. ver. 11.

we actually enter into it: add to this, the comfort which God is pleased by his Holy Spirit to shed abroad in the heart of the afflicted Christian, and the peace, which according to his promise our Lord bestows upon those who suffer with him, are more than sufficient to counterbalance the outward trials to which they may be exposed, and, even in the midst of trouble, to make them exult in the abundance of their consolation. Let it, however, be granted, that, still, the time of chastisement is a time also of mourning; yet look to

¹ See the marginal translation.

its results. If we sow in tears, it is that we may reap in joy. We suffer with Christ in this world, that we may reign with him in the next. And even now the fruit of affliction is peace to those, who use it as they ought for the more effectual cultivation of righteousness. Like the exercise practised in the athletic contests of the ancients, it may strip us of much that contributes not only to ornament, but also to our comfort, and send the spirit naked, as it were, to the appointed course; but, in so doing, it calls forth the spirit's energies, increases its moral strength, and advances it in the way of righteousness far more than would be practicable in a state of ease and enjoyment.

With such consolations did the Apostle animate his Christian countrymen to a firm endurance even of the severest persecutions, with which they might be visited in the profession of the Gospel. He bids them raise again the drooping hands, and sinking knees, so as to quit themselves like men in "the race set before them:" he exhorts them at the same time to carefulness in avoiding the rough and crooked paths of a lame judaizing Christianity, and pursuing, despite of all persecution, a plain straight-forward course of Christian faith and duty; that so, "the crooked ways being made straight," and "the rough places even," the lame might not be rendered still worse, but rather be healed, so as to "run the way of God's commandments."

Peace, indeed, was still to be maintained not only with all their fellow Christians, but even with their

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. ver. 12, 13.

persecutors, so far as it could be done without any sinful conformity, or any compromise of that holiness of character to which Christians are called, and without which they shall never see the Lord in his eternal glory. How diligently then did it become them to take care, lest the opposition of the world, combining with the efforts of sensual and profane teachers, should draw any of them astray either from the truth or the purity of the Gospel! and thus vice and error should spread, as poisonous weeds, casting a baneful influence all around them. Many still are the bitter roots which thus spring up to endanger the Christian Church, and which Christian writers, and sometimes even Christian preachers, are but too apt to plant and cherish. In one case it is gross sensuality, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness: in another, it assumes the form of profaneness, like that of Esau, openly rejecting the promised inheritance of the Gospel, as a thing of no real “profit¹,” when set against the actual necessities of life. But those, who thus imitate Esau’s profaneness, should think of his punishment: they should reflect, how much he afterwards regretted his folly; how gladly he would *then* have inherited the blessing; how earnestly he implored, even with tears, a change in his father’s purpose, yet implored in vain. And

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. ver. 14—17.

¹ Gen. xxv. 32.

so shall it be with those profane Christians, who in this world despise the promises of the Gospel. A day will come, when nothing will appear to them so precious. How ardently, in the Day of Judgment, will the scoffer seek a revocation of his doom! but how vainly! There will then be "no room for repentance" on the part of the Judge; no place for mercy, when the final sentence shall have gone forth.

To enforce still more strongly upon the Hebrew Church the necessity of adhering firmly to the Gospel, of "cleaving" stedfastly "to the Lord Jesus" through any persecutions, however severe, with which it might appear to the divine wisdom requisite to purify their faith, the Apostle urges the solemn importance of the Christian dispensation, as contrasted with that of the Law,—how mild indeed to approach, but how awful to renounce.

Great, doubtless, and extraordinary were the manifestations of the divine power and presence, which accompanied the delivery of the law: yet were they all of an earthly character, addressed only to the bodily senses;—a tangible mountain (although forbidden at the time to be approached), a fire burning visibly before the people, with "blackness and darkness and tempest," of which they were eye-witnesses, and "the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words," which were heard audibly. True it is, the

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Mo-

scene was an awful one, or, as the Scripture itself says, “terrible:” such, indeed, was the real character throughout of the Mosaic dispensation, considered in itself, apart from those blessed anticipations of redemption to come, which were preserved by it from the patriarchs, or subsequently added to it by the prophets. So terrible, indeed, was the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai, that not only the people shrunk back appalled at what they heard and saw, but Moses himself feared and trembled exceedingly.

*see said, I exceedingly
fear and quake :) ver.
18—21.*

How different is the aspect under which the Gospel presents itself from Mount Sion;—far milder and more attractive, yet more mysteriously awful, and, to those who would despise it, far more terrible; not addressing merely our mortal fears, or confining itself to punishments in which even the brute creation were included, but raising both our hopes and our apprehensions to the invisible world, and extending them into eternity. In

*But ye are come unto
mount Sion, and unto
the city of the living
God, the heavenly Jeru-
salem, and to an innu-
merable company of an-
gels, to the general as-
sembly and church of
the first-born, which are
written in heaven, and
to God the Judge of all,
and to the spirits of just
men made perfect. ver.
22, 23.*

proportion to the value of the privileges offered to us, the greater will be our condemnation if we reject them. And what privileges can in fact be more precious or more exalted? When the Israelites came to Mount Sinai, and there saw and heard those terrors to which we have just adverted, it was with a view to their becoming members of that peculiar people and polity, whose centre was the earthly Jerusalem, and which to the last continued “in bondage with her children.” But ye have come to Mount Sion: not

that you have actually approached the hill which was literally called Sion; but, as Christians, you have come to the spiritual mountain, so called in prophecy, inasmuch as it was from the visible Sion that the Gospel was first preached, and there that the Church of God, the true Temple of the Lord, was first founded. For what saith the prophet? “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that *the mountain of the Lord’s house* shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, ‘Come ye and let us go up to the *mountain of the Lord*, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths;’ for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem¹.” This then is the Mount Sion, to which Christians have come; “beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth;” a mystical mountain, prefigured by that visible one, the mountain of the Lord’s spiritual house, the Church, where he has laid that Chief Corner Stone, elect, precious, on which whosoever buildeth himself up in holy faith, he shall not be confounded. To this mountain are ye come, there to be admitted members of the divine polity, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the kingdom of the Messiah. For even whilst on earth, “the citizenship” of the Christian “is in heaven²,” that is the “country” of his soul. The kingdom of the Redeemer is “not of this world;” it is the “kingdom of heaven:” and

¹ Isa. ii. 2, 3.

² Phil. iii. 20. where see the Greek. See also Eph. ii. 19.

the Church, in its militant state here on earth, is but in a temporary condition, introductory to that of its triumph in glory. If, then, we would judge aright of this mysterious community, we must think of it not merely as it presents itself to us now, suffering, it may be, and persecuted; but in its heavenly relations and eternal prospects. We must look upon ourselves as having, under the Gospel-covenant, joined a society not of men only, but of angels also innumerable; one too, as regards even its human members, no longer confined to a particular city or land, but a vast assembly collected from every nation under heaven, a church convoked of all the first-born among the nations whose names are enrolled in heaven as heirs of the kingdom, a community with God at its head, revealing himself as the Judge of all, Jews or Gentiles, men or angels, a “holy catholic” society, embracing not only the present generation of the living, but admitting us to communion with the saints of past times, the spirits of just men who, having finished their career and become ripe for heaven, have cast away the body and its imperfections, and been perfectly justified from all their sins.

Into such a society have we, as Christians, been admitted, founded on a new and better covenant than that given from Sinai, and “which only gendered unto bondage.” For the covenant is one of which the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, is Mediator, and his own blood of sprinkling the seal;—that “blood of the covenant,” which speaketh far better things, and gives us a far better assurance both of security and

And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. ver. 24.

peace, than any sprinkling of blood could do in the sacrifices of the Law, or in the most acceptable offering ever made to God from the beginning of the world, even in that sacrifice made by the righteous Abel himself, and which the devoted worshipper offered up at the expense of his own life. Whatever value, indeed, Abel's offering might possess (and a value undoubtedly it had, for God himself testified of its worth), such value belonged to it only as an act of faith in the merciful promises of God, as a type, in short, of that better blood of sprinkling, which the Saviour was in due time to shed for the sins of the world. Moreover, together with Abel's offering, there went up a cry of vengeance. His own blood, mingled with that of his sacrifice, called for punishment on the head of the guilty Cain, and brought on the earth the first stain of murder. But the blood of Christ (although he was murdered by his brethren, by those whose nature he had assumed, by his own countrymen and tribe), while it did, it is true, bring down vengeance upon the Jews, yet for those even among the Jews, yea, for those even among the abettors of his crucifixion, who repented, that precious blood procured pardon and peace¹. In every sense, then, it is abundantly true, that Christ's "sprinkling of blood" speaketh better things than Abel's. It was the true substantial offering, of which Abel's was but a shadow;—the true peace-offering for the sins of the world, available even to his persecutors. And yet, if, after all, we remain impenitent, and continue in our sins, crucifying afresh, as it were,

¹ Acts ii. 23, 37, 38.

the Son of God, then the blood of the covenant, thus trampled under foot, will assuredly, cry for vengeance on our heads, and speak not better, but stronger, things to heaven against us than even Abel's sacrifice did against him who had polluted it with fratricide.

For if our privileges be great, our responsibility, remember, is in proportion. "He that despised Moses' law," though delivered only from a visible earthly mountain, escaped not, but received the just recompence of his profaneness, being put to death without mercy. How careful, then, should we Christians be not to refuse the Son of God speaking to us, as it were, by his own blood from amidst the true holy of holies in heaven, from that spiritual Sion, that heavenly Jerusalem, to which both the types of Palestine and the language of prophecy conspire in directing our attention! Yea, listen to them, who thus, with the voice, as it were, of his blood, and the actual preaching of the Gospel, speaks to us from the invisible world touching things of everlasting moment. It was in fact the Voice of the Son of God which was heard from Sinai;—that awful voice which "then shook the earth," so that "the whole mount quaked greatly," and which since, in the preaching of the New Testament, hath shaken, as the prophets Haggai and Joel¹ foretold, not indeed the inanimate earth, but

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. ver. 25—27.

¹ Hag. ii. 6. Joel iii. 16.

the whole political world; producing a moral convulsion throughout the whole frame of society, so as to remove out of their places the false religions of the Gentile, and the temporary dispensation of the Jew, in order to make room for the everlasting Gospel. Such is the change which, "with the word of his power," the Voice of Christ in his Church has either already effected, or is still effecting in the earth; until at length, "when the Gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, the end shall come," and a farther, a still more momentous change ensue, not merely of one *dispensation*, but of one *world*, for another; so that not the earth only, but also heaven shall literally be shaken, the Gospel itself still abiding, through the wreck of worlds and the fire of the great day, unto eternity. Such is the consummation which the word of prophecy ultimately contemplates; the last convulsion to be produced by that divine Voice, which now addresses us in the Gospel in the language of earnest, affectionate entreaty, and which man, in his folly, is so prone to despise. It now invites us to repentance: then it will summon us to judgment; and before it the earth shall pass away, and the heavens themselves be drawn aside as a curtain, or folded up as a vesture that is done with, and changed as a soiled raiment; the things that are shaken and admit of vicissitudes being removed, as things "made" to answer only a temporary purpose, that the city which hath foundations that cannot be shaken, the heavenly Jerusalem, the glorified Church of the Redeemer, may remain for ever.

With such prospects before us, well may we be expected, brethren, to endure to the end in our Christian course, even though it should occasionally be trying and afflictive; especially when we think upon the consolatory assurances which, in this chapter, the Apostle has given us, that God never visits us with afflictions unnecessarily, but to convince us of the things that belong to our peace;—that in his severest dispensations he still deals with us as a father with his children, yea with love and wisdom infinitely superior to what the best of human parents have ever shown or felt; and that our own improvement and peace are the ends intended even in our greatest troubles. If affliction befel us by chance, then indeed we might despond; or if it were to be regarded as a proof of the divine displeasure, then might we sink beneath its weight. But, when we reflect that trouble is part of our necessary discipline for immortality, that, if we would reign with Christ in heaven, we must first suffer with him upon earth¹, and that, in passing through tribulation, we are only journeying on to our eternal home, our heavenly country, as fellow-citizens with saints made perfect and angels that have never fallen; surely there is enough to sustain our drooping spirits, enough to animate our souls under the severest trials of this transitory life. For a kingdom what will not men endure? How readily, with a crown in view, have the soldiers of the world resisted unto blood, striving against those that opposed

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God accept-

¹ Rom. viii. 17, &c.

*ably with reverence and
godly fear. ver. 28.*

them, and that too even when they knew, how uncertain their success !

And shall not the soldiers of Christ strive against sin even unto blood, should the divine wisdom require it, for the sake of a kingdom which cannot be moved, “ eternal in the heavens ? ” But alas ! man of himself is sadly prone to neglect his best interest for the sake of securing present enjoyments or of avoiding transitory trouble. The weightiest considerations of eternity are too often easily overbalanced at the moment by the veriest trifles of time ; and the kingdom of heaven willingly sacrificed for what this poor earth can give. May we, brethren, be on our guard against this deceitfulness of the human heart ; and, not trusting in ourselves, or in any knowledge which we may have acquired of the glorious prospects of the Gospel, may we “ have grace ” from on high, by which alone we can render unto God ‘ true and laudable service, that we may so faithfully serve God in this life, that we fail not finally to attain his heavenly promises ¹ ! ’ It is not sufficient that the truth of the Gospel be clear to our understanding, or that it captivate our imaginations, we must obey it also from our hearts, which we cannot do without the grace of God ‘ drawing up our minds to high and heavenly things ² . ’

“ Wherefore let us have grace.” Such is the Apostle’s exhortation. That we may have it, he takes for granted ; having, in fact, already taught us, that we have in Christ an intercessor with God, who can feel for our infirmities, and through whom we may approach

¹ Collect for the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

² Art. XVII.

with boldness to the throne of grace, so as to obtain mercy, and to find grace, for our seasonable assistance. If then we have not grace, the fault is our own, in not praying for it to Him, who giveth his Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. “Ask,” then, “and ye shall have:” plead not your own natural weakness, neither rest on your own natural strength; but pray for divine grace, and rest not till you have it, and till you show that you have it, by “serving God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” For though our privileges are great and our prospects glorious, yet remember that notwithstanding, or rather that for that very reason, because we have great privileges and glorious prospects, the brightest possible hopes to stimulate our service, and the grace of God himself to assist us in it, our sin will be the greater, if we draw back and fall short of our heavenly destiny. God is still to his enemies a consuming *For our God is a consuming fire. ver. 29.* fire; as the faithless Christian will assuredly find in that day of “fiery indignation,” “when the Lord Jesus,” the present Saviour, the future Judge of mankind, “shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.” Oh! may we escape that “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,” with which the disobedient shall be “punished!” may we, with reverence and godly fear, and holy circumspection, strive continually, through the merits of Christ and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to serve God acceptably, and persevere in the same all the days of

our life, whatever be our temptations or our trials ; ever remembering, on the one hand, the everlasting glory which awaits us if we endure unto the end, and on the other, the loss which we shall sustain, yea and not only the loss, but the dreadful punishment we shall incur, if we “ draw back unto perdition !”

LECTURE XII.

Heb. xii. 4—29.

NOTES.

(P. 216.) *Proof of wrath.*]—"Amongst many of the advices which he" (Archbishop Usher) "gave to those who came to him for spiritual counsel, one was concerning afflictions, as a necessary mark of being a child of God, which some might have gathered out of certain unwary passages in books, and which he himself had met with in his youth, and which wrought upon him so much, that he earnestly prayed God to deal with him in that way; and he had his request. And he told me, that, from that time, he was not without various afflictions through the whole course of his life; and therefore he advised, that no Christian should tempt God to show such a sign for a mark of his paternal love, but to wait, and be prepared for them, and patient under them, and consider the intent of them, so as to be the better for them, when they are inflicted: and by no means to judge of a man's spiritual state either by or without afflictions, for they are fallible evidences in spiritual matters; but that we should look after a real sincere conversion and internal holiness, which indeed is the only true character and evidence of a state of salvation." Parr's Life of Abp. Usher, p. 90.

(P. 218.) *Send the spirit naked.*]—*γεννημασμενους*, ver. 11. Vox usurpatur "*ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγωνιζομένων γυμνῶν*."

(P. 219.) *Sensual and profane teachers.*]—Called they or their doctrines "roots of bitterness;" like Balaam: such as infested the Christian Church at this time, as appears from 2 Pet. ii. and the *Epistle of St. Jude*.—See Introduction.

(P. 219.) *Implored in vain.*]—The warning drawn from Esau's case is strong against the Socinian purgatory.

(P. 221.) *Moses said, &c. ver. 21.*]—In *Exod.* xix. 19. it is not stated what words Moses “spake;” that the Apostle must have known from tradition, or else he gives the spirit of the passage. See Macknight.

(P. 224.) *Sacrifice made by the righteous Abel.*] *παρὰ τὸν* (s. c. *ῥαντισμὸν*) *Ἀβὲλ*, ver. 24. as is most satisfactorily shown in a valuable criticism on the passage in the late Professor Nicoll’s posthumous Sermons.—It is not Abel’s own blood that is spoken of, but that of his sacrifice.—The other meaning, however, is included in the exposition, as an application, rather than an explication of the words, for the use of those who may still cling to that interpretation.

(P. 225.) *Stronger things.*]—*κρείττονα*, ver. 24. has both the meanings given it in the exposition:—“better” to those that believe; “stronger” against the unbelieving.

(P. 229.) *Fear and holy circumspection.*]—See ch. xi. 7. The word there is *εὐλαβηθεῖς*, here *εὐλαβείας*, ver. 28.

LECTURE XIII.

VARIOUS PRACTICAL ADMONITIONS.

HEB. xiii. 1—21.

Let brotherly love continue. ver. 1.

AN attentive reader of the Epistles of St. Paul will observe a tone of practical piety running through the whole of them, and, like the exuberant Nile, overflowing *continually* the channel of his argument into the neighbouring fields of human life and action; so that the trees planted by the water-side may bring forth their fruit in due season. In several of these Epistles we further find, that the *conclusion* is expressly preceptive, and full of exhortations to Christian obedience. This is remarkable in the case of those Epistles which are, in their general character, the most argumentative, and therefore the least directly practical: in that, for instance, to the Romans, in those to the Galatians and Ephesians, and again in this to the Hebrews: as if to impress upon us more emphatically the important truth, that doctrine and practice ought to be inseparably united, and that each without the

other is defective. The truths which we learn in the school of divinity, may not be, like those of other schools, mere speculations of science, but are addressed to man in his compound nature, as a being at once intellectual and active, endowed with understanding chiefly, if not solely, with a view to the practical purposes of life. In all knowledge, perhaps, there is a defect, until it be converted to some practical use. But be this as it may in regard to other kinds of knowledge, it is certainly true in religion. Here what we learn we must practise;—must bring it to bear on our lives, to regulate our characters, to influence our motives and principles, disposition and tempers, hopes and fears, words and works. Accordingly we not only see the sublime truths, which the Apostle has unfolded in this Epistle, brought down to daily life in that general exhortation:—“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear;” but we further behold this exhortation unfolded into particular precepts, and applied to the different individual graces of the Christian character.

The graces more particularly pressed by the Apostle upon the Hebrew Christians, are the following:—Brotherly love, hospitality, sympathy for the afflicted, chastity, freedom from covetousness, attention to their spiritual guides, constancy in the Christian faith and service, agreeably to their teaching:—graces of which, though the practice may be modified by a change of circumstances, the obligation is substantially perpetual. Let us therefore consider them successively, and consider also our own concern in them.

“Let brotherly love continue.” In the times of persecution and false doctrine, the love of the Christian towards his brethren in Christ would be too apt, as our Lord himself had expressly foretold, to “wax cold¹.” Such, probably, was already the case in the persecuted Church of Palestine. The troubles which some Christians, especially the more distinguished, who were engaged in preaching the Gospel from place to place, endured in return at the hands of the unconverted Jew, might naturally lead many a one, in his weakness and fear, to look coldly on his brethren, and, in these his members, to deny our Lord, much in the same spirit that Peter did, lest he should be taken for “one of them.” “But let brotherly love continue,” saith the Apostle :

whatever be the troubles or persecutions of your brethren in Christ, still love them. If they come to you as strangers, driven, it may be, from other regions, yet hoping to be received by you, forget not to entertain them hospitably ; for who can tell, but that, in the per-

Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers : for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them ; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.
ver. 1—3.

son of an unknown stranger, ye may be entertaining, if not an angel from heaven, yet one who is as an angel of God, an Evangelist, or it may be an Apostle, whom ye will certainly do well in forwarding on their sacred journeyings, “worthily of” that “God” whose chosen “messengers” they are. Or if you find your brethren

¹ “And then” (i. e. as the destruction of Jerusalem approached) “shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity [lawless oppression] shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” *Matt. xxiv.* 10—12.

imprisoned, despise not their bonds, but feel for them, as if you were bound with them, putting yourself in their place, and then considering how gladly you would hail the sympathy of a fellow-Christian; nay, how bitterly you would feel it, when imprisoned for the sake of Christ, to be not only persecuted by his enemies, but shunned by his very disciples. And *whatever* be the adversity of your brethren, let them ever receive your sympathy, as under the like trials, to which while in the flesh all are liable, you would be thankful for theirs.

Such we may conceive to be the peculiar force of the Apostle's precepts, as applicable to the Hebrew Christians. Let us observe, now, their application to ourselves. For although we have not fallen upon the evil days of persecution (how long, however, even such days may be strange to us, we know not), yet, even in times of peace, and in a nationally established Church, there is abundant need of brotherly love, of Christian affection toward those who are members with us of the family of God. There is need of it towards all our brethren. If love governed our intercourse one with another, how different would be the state of Christian society from what it is! For love worketh no ill to one's neighbour, but, on the contrary, all manner of good; it "maketh men to be of one mind in a house;" it "prays for the peace" of cities and states; smoothes the rugged, softens the angry, and sweetens the revengeful temper; teaches man, in short, to regard himself not as an isolated being, whose business it is to consult only his own interest or inclination, but to feel and act as a member of the great Christian family, whose good he must seek as earnestly and as anxiously

as his own. In no case, however, is the need of brotherly love so apparent, or its use so important, as in that of the afflicted. To them the very voice of sympathy is balm; its good offices inestimable: and to encourage his disciples in thus remembering the stranger, the prisoner, the sick, the hungry, or the naked, our Lord has assured us that he will consider the kindness shown to them as done to himself, and in no wise forget those who are mindful of his suffering members.

For of suffering, there is still enough in the world to call for all your sympathy. Even the entertaining of the stranger, though now and in this country less frequently and forcibly called for as an act of Christian affection, than formerly in Palestine, may not, however, be laid aside as an obsolete duty. By poor strangers our pity is often appealed to for relief: and although in some such cases there may be imposture, and in others indiscretion, yet should none be dismissed without at least the trouble of inquiry; nor to any need we refuse that sustenance which is necessary to the support of life and strength, and which, when judiciously bestowed, cannot well be abused. Even if there be imposture, it is better to be deceived into unnecessary hospitality, than to deceive ourselves by vain excuses into hardness of heart; and as to indiscretion, let him that is without fault himself, take up the first stone and cast it at the indiscreet. Besides poor strangers, other cases may occur, falling still more directly within the Apostle's rule;—such, for instance, as those in which, by receiving at our houses individuals, although strangers to us, who may be engaged in some good work, we may be forwarding

them on their way. He that thus receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, (or, in other words, a teacher in the Church of God, as such), shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward, nor shall a cup of cold water given to a disciple of Christ, be overlooked or unrewarded.

From the duties of Christian sympathy, the Apostle passes on to those of chastity; a virtue, for the preservation of which, our Maker provided by the institution, even in Paradise, of the holy estate of marriage; which he here declares by his Apostle to be "honourable in all." As connected with the duties of chastity, not only the practice, but the very doctrines of the heathen were notoriously licentious. Even among the Jews, Moses was obliged to accommodate himself, in some measure, to the hardness of men's hearts, and, for the *sake of avoiding greater evils*, to allow a licence both of polygamy and divorce, inconsistent with the character of the marriage union, as originally instituted between our first parents, and affording a melancholy proof of the degeneracy into which their descendants had fallen. When, however, our Lord Jesus Christ came to *remedy* the evils of the Fall, and to *restore* man to righteousness, he published anew the original law of marriage, and, placing the state once more upon its primitive footing, honoured it with his first miracle, yea, and adopted it as an emblem of the union between himself and his Church, and of the love which he bears to his redeemed for ever. Thus did marriage become again, what it was at first intended

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. ver. 4.

to be, the most sacred of all earthly ties, the closest of friendships, the first of human charities, the centre of our natural affections, the root of all other relationships, the best pattern of mutual love, blessed of God when he made the world, and honoured by his Son when he came to redeem it. Well might the Apostle call such a state "honourable;" and well might he admonish those, who would either set it aside by their licentiousness, or who, with still greater wickedness, would break its holy vows by adultery, of the awful judgment which awaits them. The first heretics¹, whilst they perverted the doctrines, corrupted also the morality of the Gospel; "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness," at the same time that they denied "our only supreme God and Lord Jesus Christ." It was, most probably, by such evil teachers that the Hebrew Churches were in danger of being seduced from the faith; the fear of persecution, combining with the lusts of the flesh, to lead "many to follow their pernicious ways." We accordingly hear not only St. Paul in this passage, and still more plainly before, in the twelfth chapter, (ver. 15, 16.) warning the Hebrews against the poisonous fruits produced from this root of bitterness, but we have the same warning enforced by others of the Apostles, particularly by St. Peter, St. Jude, and St. John. And would to God that the warning had ceased to be necessary in the present day! Would that there were none now to regard, if not adultery, at least other kinds of uncleanness, as venial infirmities, and to speak with levity of sins, for which God will call them into judg-

¹ See the Introduction.

ment! Woe (if they repent not) to the followers of such pernicious ways, who do such things as plainly exclude men from the kingdom of God¹! but greater woe still to the teachers of the same, "whose judgment lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not²." But blessed are the pure,—the pure in heart, for they shall see God!

To personal purity, the Hebrews are exhorted to add a course of conduct free from covetousness or the

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. ver. 5, 6.

love of money; and, in order to this, contentment; and, in order to contentment, a humble confidence in the unceasing providence and succour of the Almighty; who not only can supply all our wants, and, if he sees fit, defend from all oppression, but who has graciously promised never to forsake his people, but evermore to be their helper. It is want of faith which leads men to attach so much value to money, and to trust in riches, instead of in the living God. It is want of faith which makes us dissatisfied with that supply of the necessities and conveniences of life, which the merciful wisdom of an Almighty Providence has allotted to us. If we really believed ourselves to be in all things under the Divine care, we should not dare, we should not even desire, to complain; and our conduct, instead of being prompted by a covetous selfishness, aiming continually at more and more of this world's wealth, would be that (if we are poor) of men contented to be poor with Christ on

¹ Gal. v. 19, &c.

² 2 Peter ii. 3.

earth, so that they may attain to his riches in glory ; or if, in a greater or less degree, we are rich, then should we be accordingly “ ready to communicate, and glad to distribute,” anxious only to make to ourselves “ friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,” that, when we fail from all our earthly possessions, we may be received into “ everlasting habitations.”

The concluding precept of the Apostle has still in view the preservation of the Hebrews in the true faith of the Gospel. For this end, he bids them remember their spiritual guides, especially those great guides, who first¹ preached the Gospel to them ; to call to mind who and what they were ; no self-willed or self-constituted teachers, but the Apostles of Christ ;—men who, instead of compromising their principles with the false opinions of their countrymen, or conforming their practice to their evil example, jeopardized their lives for the sake of the Gospel, and kept themselves unspotted by the world. Such, for example, was St. James, the son of Alphaeus, the first bishop of the Hebrew Christian Church, and therefore their more peculiar guide in the faith of Christ. After watching over the Hebrew Church for the space of nearly thirty years, he is recorded to have fallen a victim to the fury of the Jews, a short time² before this Epistle to the Hebrews was written. It is not improbable, therefore, that the injunction given to them, to remember their guides, who had spoken to them the word of God, may have a particular refer-

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God : whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation : ver. 7.

¹ See the Notes.

² See the Introduction.

ence, as to other martyrs, like Stephen, for instance, or James, the brother of John, whom Herod killed with the sword, so especially to the more recent martyrdom of the other James, their own peculiar bishop. Such guides were not to be forgotten as soon as they were gone, but to be had in everlasting remembrance, and to continue, after death, to be guides of the Church still by their holy examples. Their course of conduct had been one of uncompromising faith, ready to resist unto blood, and issuing in martyrdom: and this their faith was still to be imitated. What was yesterday the piety of the Apostle, was to day to be that of the disciple; for "Jesus Christ is"¹ always

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. ver. 8, 9.

"the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and so is his religion; unimpaired by the mortality of its ministers; unaltered, in itself, by the removal of any, even the most faithful, guides or governors. The Gospel remained, and would always continue, irreconcilable with sin and error. New teachers might, indeed, arise; new views might be broached, new doctrines be invented, "divers and strange," to excuse the judaizing Christian, and so to avert persecution. But in vain: "the truth, as it is in Jesus," was unchanged and unchangeable. The only course, therefore, was to rest in the faith, with the heart established, in peace and confidence, by a steadfast reliance upon the grace of God, as shown to sinful man in Christ crucified, who is the "bread of life;"

¹ See the Notes.

and not to seek for rest and stability to the soul, either in abstaining from meats pronounced by the law unclean, or in partaking of those which had been offered up in sacrifice. Such carnal ordinances were only temporary, and were now to be abandoned. The dispensation to which they belonged, decaying and waxing old, was ready to vanish away¹. Whatever concessions to Jewish prejudices had at first been sanctioned, it was only in the beginning, in order to wean the Jew gradually from his ancient faith, and to avoid unnecessary offence. But the time, it seems, had now come, when a stricter line of separation was to be drawn. The “beggarly elements” were to be thrown aside altogether; and the Christian religion was no longer to be blended with Jewish observances, which the experience of the Church had shown to be so liable to abuse.

Not that Christianity is without its altar, or without its sacrifices. “We have an altar,” saith the Apostle, but one quite distinct from those of the Jews, and of which, in fact, they have no right to eat, who would still serve the tabernacle. The shadows must be relinquished, if we would avail ourselves of the substance. For ours is the true altar, of which all others were, at the best, but introductory adumbrations. It is the altar of the cross, on which was offered up the only availing sacrifice for the sins

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have

¹ Ch. viii. 13.

we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. ver. 10—16.

of men. And of this sacrifice we “still keep the feast” continually in the Supper of the Lord; we there show forth our Lord’s death till his coming again; we there spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, and celebrate the true passover, to which that of the Jews was intended to lead both us and them. In this great spiritual ‘feast on the sacrifice’ of the death of Christ, which was made upon the altar of the cross, there was no communion to the Jew, while he adhered to the carnal ordinances of the law, as necessary to his salvation. The law itself did, in fact, intimate from the first that the great “sin-offering,” would be something distinct and separate from the services of the Jewish ritual, when it directed that the body of the victim should be burned, not upon the altar of the tabernacle, but altogether “without the camp¹” of Israel. Accordingly, when the Lord Jesus shed his own blood for the consecration of his people to the service of God, it was without the gates of Jerusalem that he suffered. It was no longer a mere *rite*, but a true, full, and sufficient sacrifice; no longer a *Jewish* offering, but a general propitiation for the sins of the whole world; no longer a *national* altar like that of Jerusalem, belonging to one particular people, or attached to an earthly home, but one removed without the gate: and thither must we go forth, forsaking the Mosaic ritual for a spiritual faith,

¹ Levit. iv. 21.

and the earthly city for an abiding one to come, even though, as we go, the reproach of the Jew or the contempt of the world should follow us, as it did our Lord:—thither, without the gate, must the Christian go, and there feasting spiritually, in the blessed sacrament of his death, on the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood, offer up through him unto God, both then and always, the fruit of his *lips* and the fruit of his *life*:—from his lips, praise for the mercies of God in Christ, and a public confession of his name;—in his life, deeds of beneficence and liberality. These are the *sacrifices* of the Christian, with which, when so offered up in humble faith upon the altar of the cross, God is well pleased.

Such was the teaching of the Apostles of Christ; such the intimations of the law itself: yet beset on all sides, as the Hebrew Christians were, with subtle teachers of Judaism, ever anxious to entrap the disciples of Christ, as they had endeavoured throughout his ministry to ensnare our Lord himself, they needed not only the letters of a distant Apostle, or the remembrance of one that was dead, but the continual admonitions and authority of present living guides. And such guides, it appears, they had: and their admonition St. Paul bids them obey, and submit to their rule, so as not to be led away by the seducing arguments of their enemies, nor dismayed by their threats; but to remember that their Christian guides were their true friends, even in their least welcome counsel or

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. ver. 17.

most painful regulations; watching for the eternal welfare of their souls, under a sense of the solemn account which would be required of them, not only by the Church below, but by Christ himself in the Day of Judgment. How important, then, to listen to and to follow them, that they might be able to give in their account with joy, as good and faithful disciples; not with lamentation, as for apostates—a result most grievous to themselves, and to their charge how unprofitable, even if, by judaizing conformity, they might gain the whole world, yet withal lose their own souls!

Whilst urging on the Hebrews obedience to the spiritual guides of their own Church, St. Paul requests

Pray for us : for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. ver. 18, 19.

their prayers for himself, as a faithful Apostle of the Church at large—one, who had ever, even when a Pharisee, lived “in all good conscience before God,” who afterwards had conscientiously obeyed the Voice from heaven calling him to be an Apostle of Christ, and in that office had “exercised himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men,” seeking sincerely the salvation of those to whom he preached or wrote; and amongst all men, whether Gentiles or Jews, and in all things, willing to conduct himself honestly, however his adversaries might have reviled¹ and persecuted him as a “pestilent person and a mover of sedition

¹ “I suffer trouble, as an evil-doer, even unto bonds.” 2 Tim. ii. 9.

among all the Jews throughout the world.” For so had he been treated by the Jews, and, above all, in Jerusalem: yet to the Jews and to Jerusalem was he anxious to be restored; and for this purpose he earnestly entreats their prayers, that by his presence he might the more effectually assist in confirming the souls of the disciples, by exhorting them to continue in the faith, and admonishing them “that they must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Such are the concluding exhortations of the Apostle;—exhortations to brotherly love, to Christian hospitality and compassion, to chastity, to freedom from covetousness, to constancy in the faith, after the example of those guides of the Church who were gone to rest, and in obedience to those who still remained. Such, I say, are the Apostle’s exhortations: but what

are the exhortations even of an Apostle, unaccompanied by prayer to God to give them effect? Paul may plant, and Apollos water; yea, the chosen Twelve may plant a church at the very foot of Sion, and Paul himself may water it; but it is God, who giveth the increase. To Christians in any age or country, and under any circum-

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. ver. 20, 21.

stances, however favourable, it is the God of peace alone who can give peace by enabling us to believe the Gospel from the heart unto righteousness: and it is He alone, who can heal the divisions of a distracted Church. The God who raised the great Shepherd when smitten for his flock, after that by his own blood he had established a New Covenant for them—He

can restore a drooping Church, or raise again the fallen Christian, so as to make us perfect in every good work, by working in us both to will and to do, even in the greatest trials, that which is good and well-pleasing before Him, through Jesus Christ;—to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and not to our own treacherous hearts, or feeble strength, be all the glory of whatever good we are enabled to do, for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XIII.

Heb. xiii. 1—21.

NOTES.

(P. 235.) *Worthily of that God.*]—ἀξίως τοῦ Θεοῦ, 3 John 6.

(P. 236.) *Messengers.*]—ἄγγελοι, ver. 2.

(P. 241.) *Guides, who first preached.*]—The Greek is as follows: τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν (*your guides*, not necessarily *your living guides*), οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν ὑμῖν (*whoever they were that spoke to you*, not “have spoken.”—See the Introduction.

(P. 242.) *Is always the same, &c.*]—In our version ver. 8. is translated, or rather the punctuation is such, as would lead one to expect Ἰησοῦν, in the accusative case. Evidently there is an ellipsis of the verb substantive; and that because no one particular tense could be used with precision, neither ἦν, nor ἔστι, nor ἔσται. Such an ellipsis is common in Greek.—ἐκβασιν in ver. 7. is in allusion to the martyrdom of some of their chief guides; the word implies that the Apostle is speaking of departed guides.

(P. 245.) *Present living guides*]—St. James was succeeded in the bishopric of Jerusalem by his brother Simon, another son of Alpheus, who was also one of the twelve Apostles.

(P. 248.) *Restore a drooping Church.*]—καταρτίζειν, ver. 21: comp. Matt. iv. 21. and Gal. vi. 1. or reunite a divided one: as in the Exposition.

LECTURE XIV.

WRITER OF THE EPISTLE:—GENERAL REVIEW AND APPLICATION.

HEB. xiii. 22—25.

And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation. ver. 22.

WE have now, in a series of Lectures adapted (I would hope) to the comprehension of almost any attentive reader of the English Bible, gone through nearly the whole of this most interesting Epistle to the Hebrews. In the few sentences that remain, the Apostle

And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty: with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen. ver. 22—25.

first entreats a favourable reception of his hortatory letter, which, occupied with several important subjects, was but short in comparison with their importance; he then sends them intelligence respecting Timothy, and mentions his expectation of soon seeing them, in company with that faithful “brother,” should he arrive in time; and, finally, he concludes with the usual salutations from the Church with which he was, as well as from himself.

On those verses I have a few remarks to make, relative to the *writer* of the Epistle, the *persons to whom* it was addressed, and the *time* at which it was written. The *writer of the Epistle* I have, from the first, in accordance with the prevailing opinion¹ on the subject, assumed to be the Apostle Paul. True it is, his name is not prefixed to this, as to his other Epistles, in the form of an inscription; as, for instance, in that to the Ephesians, “Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the saints which are at Ephesus:” but for this omission there are obvious reasons. He was writing, you must keep in mind, to *Jews*, and those the Jews of Palestine, nay, most probably of Jerusalem itself; and although the persons more particularly addressed are Christian Jews, yet we cannot suppose that an Apostle, especially one of St. Paul’s affectionate and patriotic spirit, who was willing to become, if possible, a devoted victim² for the sake of his Jewish brethren, his “kinsmen according to the flesh:”—he, we cannot but suppose, in writing to the converted Hebrews, would desire so to write, as to gain also the unconverted. But who so unlikely to be listened to by Jews, especially by the unbelieving Jews of Jerusalem, as St. Paul, whom recently, on his *last*³ visit, they had driven thence as a person unworthy of existence, crying after him, “Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live⁴.” His mission to the Gentiles rendered him peculiarly obnoxious to the Jewish nation. Even the great bulk of believing Jews partook, in some

¹ See the Introduction.

² Rom. ix. 3.

³ See the Introduction.

⁴ Acts xxii. 22.

measure, of this feeling, and viewed St. Paul with suspicion, as one who "taught the Jews, among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses;" an idea which they, being "zealous for the law¹," could not for a moment endure. What then was to be done? Was the Apostle to suppress his zeal for the instruction of his believing, or the conversion of his unbelieving, countrymen, and so refrain from writing altogether? Or, on the other hand, was he to awaken all their prejudices, and stop their ears at once, by inscribing the Epistle to them in his own name. Or would he not, naturally, take a middle course, and, whilst giving that testimony which from him they were so unwilling to receive, refrain from all allusion to himself until the very close of his letter, and then speak of himself only in general terms, so as to veil himself, as it were, from common observation, and to leave it, in some degree, a question (as it is to this day), whether the Epistle was his or not?

We must also consider farther that St. Paul was the Apostle of the Gentiles, not of the circumcision; and that, therefore, he did not write to the Hebrews as their Apostle, but simply addressed to them "the word of exhortation," a hortatory course of reasoning from their own Scriptures, in virtue of that especial wisdom, and, I might add, in consequence of that pre-eminent zeal², with which he appears to have been endowed. St. Peter seems to intimate that St. Paul was peculiarly favoured with that inspired wisdom, which belonged in different degrees to the apostolic character generally, when he says, "Even as our beloved brother Paul, accord-

¹ Acts xxi. 20.

² — "laboured more abundantly than they all." 1 Cor. xv. 10.

ing to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you¹." And we may observe, that the great majority of the inspired Epistles, indeed almost all of an argumentative character, are from the hand of St. Paul: he appears to have been the chief *doctor* (if we may so speak) of the Christian Church. It should seem to have been in this capacity, and not as to the Corinthian, for instance, in the exercise of any Apostolic *authority*, that he wrote to the Church in Judea. The distinction is an obvious one. Even in the present day, churches are benefited by the writings of those who have no authority over them, or connexion with them, as their peculiar guides and instructors. How much more might the Hebrew Church receive instruction from an Apostle, though not peculiarly their Apostle!

Whether St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews of his own accord, or at the request of any one else, it is impossible to say. But be this as it may, we cannot doubt that he, whose maxim it was not to build on foundations laid by others, would not obtrude himself upon the Church in Palestine, even as a teacher, without a just occasion; at the same time we can easily conceive with what readiness he would embrace any legitimate opportunity of furthering the Gospel among his countrymen, and in some measure making amends to them, as an Apostle, for the evil he had done as a persecutor, especially at Jerusalem, by punishing the Christians, and compelling them to blaspheme.

The chief reason for doubting that this Epistle was written by St. Paul, is the absence of his name; but

¹ 2 Peter-iii. 15.

we see that, in writing to Jews, he was more likely to omit than to insert any mention of himself;—an omission, in fact, indispensable in his case, but in any other of the great Christian teachers at once unnecessary and unnatural. To St. Paul, then, let us not hesitate to ascribe this admirable Epistle, especially when we find the writer to be one who speaks of Timothy as the companion of his labours. “Know ye,” he says, “that our brother Timothy is set at liberty,” or, rather, “has been sent away,” not dismissed from prison, but dispatched by the Apostle on some particular business, from which he was soon expected to return; “with whom,” continues the Apostle, “if he come shortly, I will see you.”

Now we know from the other Epistles of St. Paul, as well as from the Acts of the Apostles, that *Timothy* was a favourite convert and distinguished companion of the Apostle, one for whom he had a particular esteem, and whom he employed on some of his most important commissions. It appears, also, that he was with St. Paul, when, a prisoner at Rome, he dictated his Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon: and that, towards the close¹ apparently of his imprisonment, St. Paul intended to send him to the Philippians. It was on this errand, probably, that the Apostle had recently dismissed his faithful suffragan; and being now, it should seem, released from his confinement at Rome, he was eagerly awaiting the return of Timothy, that with him he might, as he had pro-

¹ When he was expecting to be released: “Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.” *Philip.* ii. 23, 24, (and 19).

mised, visit the Philippians and other Churches in those parts, and then proceed on to Jerusalem. Clearly it was only St. Paul who would thus speak of Timothy, as the brother who was continually employed in ministering to the furtherance of his apostolic labours, and in aiding him more especially in the episcopal "care of all the Churches," which, by God's blessing on those labours, he had been able to plant.

The very *salutations*, being from persons in Italy, point to St. Paul, of whom the last that we read in the Acts of the Apostles, is, that he remained "two whole years" at Rome, "in a house hired for him, and received all that came to him, preaching the kingdom, and teaching those things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all freedom of speech, no man forbidding him." Doubtless the Christians who already believed, and those who were added to them through the preaching of St. Paul, not only in Rome, but throughout Italy, would interest themselves deeply in the concerns of the Church in Palestine, and might naturally request that their salutations might be joined with his own. Nor should we omit to observe, that the marked respect here shown by the Apostle, and before inculcated, to the rulers of the Hebrew Church, implies, that the writer of the Epistle was one who did not assume to himself any ecclesiastical authority over the Church in Judea, being, as we have said, the Apostle of the Gentiles more particularly, and as such referring them for more immediate direction to their own spiritual guides.

As a still further presumption, if not proof, of the Epistle being St. Paul's, we may notice the closing benediction,—*"Grace be with you all. Amen."*—A

form of salutation peculiar to St. Paul, and which was written, he tells us¹, in all his Epistles with his own hand, as the token of their genuineness. It was so, probably, in this. The rulers and chief members of the Church would readily, no doubt, recognise the hand-writing of St. Paul; whilst, being unknown to the Jews at large, its insertion might well consist with that concealment, which was advisable, not only from the enemies of the Gospel in Judea, but even from the more prejudiced Christians themselves.

When we reflect upon "such an one as St. Paul," for nearly thirty years an "ambassador, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ²," or at least but recently delivered from his chain, full of solicitude for the Churches which he had planted, yea, when called upon for the instruction of those which were under the rule of other guides;—when we behold him supplying, by his Epistles, the want of his personal presence, that even if he was bound, the Gospel might not therefore be shackled in its course; when we witness his affectionate intentions of again closing a visitation of his Churches by a visit to Jerusalem, although he was only just escaped from the four years' confinement, first at Cesarea, and then at Rome, in which his last visit had resulted, we cannot but admire his Apostolic devotedness, his patriotic zeal, his laborious performance of his duties, the absence of all selfish considerations, and the perseverance which he displayed under every difficulty and every danger. Nor is this a subject for barren admiration only, but one to be, in its spirit, imitated by ourselves, according to the duties

¹ 2 Thess. iii. 17.

² Philem. 9. (where see the Greek) and Eph. vi. 20.

which we have to perform, or the trials which we may be called upon to undergo. It would be interesting to enlarge on this part of the holy Apostle's example; but our attention must, at present, be confined to his Epistle; of which, with God's blessing, we have in conclusion to take a general review, as well as to make a general application to ourselves of the "word of exhortation" addressed by the Apostle to the Christians of Judea.

The general character of the Epistle is described by the writer himself, when he calls it a "word of exhortation;"—of exhortation, that is, to perseverance in the faith, notwithstanding all temptations to apostasy, whether arising from the persecutions of powerful enemies, or the subtle arguments of false teachers. It is not, however, a bare exhortation, but one enforced by the most weighty arguments, drawn from those very Scriptures, out of which the Jewish unbeliever, or the judaizing Christian, would each of them reason, whether for the subversion or corruption of the Gospel. In these Scriptures none were better versed than St. Paul: none revered them more; only he would add to them "faith in Christ Jesus," yea, and from them prove to the Jews the paramount importance of the Gospel, and the awful danger attending its rejection or neglect, that so they might really "make wise unto salvation¹." Accordingly, in

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

this Epistle, we see Jesus, considered as the great Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, receiving testimony, both from the Law and the Prophets, to the pre-eminent superiority in Him of those high offices, above any similar offices ever held under any previous dispensation of religion. For Jesus, our Apostle, is not merely a Prophet, but the only-begotten Son of God; whom the angels, the highest messengers employed under the Law, are, in the Old Testament itself, commanded to serve and worship as their King and their Maker, the Lord of all the hosts of heaven and earth, the everlasting Creator. How shall such a messenger be received, but with the utmost reverence and attention? (Lect. I.) Again, though Jesus be also the Son of man, yet is he, as such, the predicted King of the Church of God, stooping to take upon him human flesh, that therein he might, as our High-Priest, suffer for us, and, suffering, both atone for all our sins, and feel for us in all our trials. (Lect. II.)

Such is the Apostle and High-Priest whom we are led by St. Paul to contemplate, as the great Subject of ancient prophecy, no less than of Gospel preaching:—an *Apostle*, faithful like his precursor Moses, but infinitely better than Moses, and holding out to us the prospect of an incomparably better rest than Canaan (Lect. III.);—a High-Priest, appointed such by God himself, to be unto us the Author of eternal salvation (Lect. IV.); one, in the sanctifying knowledge of whom we should endeavour to advance continually, pressing on towards perfection, (Lect. V.) For greater far is he than Aaron or any of the high-priests of Aaron's order, who were only imperfect priests for a

time, until the coming of that everlasting High-Priest, who was typified in Melchisedec, and appointed with the oath of God (Lect. VI.) to be, a Mediator of a better covenant, the minister of the true tabernacle in heaven, (Lect. VII.) of which the tabernacle at Shiloh was but a humble type, (Lect. VIII.)

How stedfastly should the people of such a High-Priest cleave to him with full purpose of heart! especially when they reflect that, in forsaking Him, they abandon all hopes of acceptance with God, and, if they draw back, do it to their own perdition! (Lect. IX.) How earnestly should they strive, as did the faithful men of the older dispensation, and with the example of Christ himself before them, patiently to finish their course of faith, and not, by fainting in the midst, fail of the joy set before them! (Lect. X. and XI.); not despising or sinking under the chastening of the Lord, however severe, nor daring to provoke that fiery indignation which will consume the adversaries of his Son, (Lect. XII.)

Having thus enforced upon the Hebrews, from their own Scriptures, the divine dignity of our Lord's apostleship and priesthood, with the necessity of cleaving to Christianity, and persevering in it to the end, notwithstanding the greatest trials or troubles, St. Paul closes with a few precepts more particularly called for in the circumstances of the Hebrew Church, and especially with an exhortation to constancy in the faith of the Gospel, pure and uncorrupted by Judaism; adding his prayers for the furtherance of the Hebrews in every good work, (Lect. XIII.) Such are the contents of this excellent, this inspired Epistle, which, according to the general belief of antiquity, we have

considered to be from the pen of St. Paul, as indeed the concluding sentences would of themselves be well nigh sufficient to prove, (Lect. XIV.)

It only remains that we should briefly advert to some of these general inferences, applicable to ourselves, with which it was proposed to follow up the review we have just taken.

But perhaps it may be thought, that we have little practical concern with a letter, whose great object was to prevent Christians from corrupting their faith with *Judaism*, or abandoning it by *apostasy*. And yet I know not if our concern in it may not be of a closer character than many may suspect. True it is, we see and acknowledge the difference between Judaism and Christianity;—although recent occurrences of too public a character, and recent language held in high places, might lead one almost to suppose, that we are beginning to forget that our Lord suffered “without the gate” of Jerusalem, beginning to think that there may be no such necessity, as the Apostle imagined, to “go forth unto Jesus without the camp, bearing his reproach.”—But waiving these somewhat suspicious symptoms, nationally speaking, of the purity of our faith, there is another kind of Judaism, to which I would advert, as being still more common, although no less strongly condemned in the Epistle. What I allude to is, the practice, if I may so speak, of *judaizing the Old Testament*, that is, of taking confined views of it, as the Jews of old did, and not regarding it as pointing continually to Christ, the royal High-Priest of that society, that heavenly kingdom, to which from the beginning the revelations of God have been directing

the attention and hopes of mankind. Christ is the great “end of the law,” of the Psalms, and of the Prophets. Those who stop short of tracing Him, as typified in the ordinances of the Old Testament, promised in its predictions, and even prefigured in its history, make the Old Testament, in a great measure, a dead letter, and, as far as in them lies, destroy the unity of the Church of God, the identity of the divine promises, the harmony of the faith; yea, and snap asunder the chain of revelation, reaching as it does from the beginning to the end of time, from the fall of man in Adam to his final redemption in Christ. In the Epistle to the Hebrews a better lesson is taught us. The veil is drawn aside which too frequently hung over the heart of the Jew, concealing from him the heavenly excellence of his religion; and we behold as it were Moses and the Prophets, with Aaron and all the high-priests of the law, the venerable Melchisedec also, yea and the angelic host of heaven, laying all their glories at the feet of Jesus, and acknowledging HIM as the great object of all those earlier dispensations, in which *they* were employed only as ministers and messengers of God, for a testimony unto his SON. If *they* appear in glory, it is that we may “hear HIM” more attentively as the great *Apostle*, whom the Father has sent to teach truth to an erring world; if *they* speak, it is of “HIS decease at Jerusalem,” when as our *High-Priest* he offered himself up, without the gate, for the sins of the world. Even the tabernacle itself is but a mirror of the Church of Christ, or rather a shadow which the true Tabernacle cast before it “in the Mount,” when the light of heaven shone upon it, so that Moses beheld, not indeed the thing itself, but

“the fashion thereof,” and made his tabernacle after the pattern which he “was caused to see¹.” Its services direct us to the blessings of the Gospel; and its very form raises our hopes to that heaven, which Christ has purchased for us by his blood.

But be it granted that thus far we are in danger of *Judaism*, and need to be admonished to read the law with the light of the Gospel beaming continually upon it;—surely we are in no danger of *apostasy*? And yet, let us pause and inquire. Apostasy is a defection from Christ, not from the Christian *name* merely, but from the real, substantial *truth* of Christianity. It does not appear that the Hebrews, to whom St. Paul wrote, abandoned the name of Christians; but that they were giving up certain *essential parts* of the Christian faith, particularly the *divinity of Christ*, his *atoning sacrifice on the cross*, and his *all-prevailing intercession in heaven*. Against such defection was it that the voice from Italy was heard at Jerusalem, uttering its warnings in terms the most solemn that language can supply. And is there no such defection now? Are there none, who deny the divinity of our Lord? none who ascribe no sacrificial efficacy to his death? none who pray *without* a mediator? or through *other* mediators than the Son of God? If such deadly errors still abound, it matters not that we are not driven into them, as were the Hebrews, by persecution. Apostasy may be produced by slighter causes, and becomes then only the more criminal. In the present day, our great danger, perhaps, is from the spirit called *liberality*, but more properly known as

¹ Exod. xxvi. 30. xxv. 40.

latitudinarianism; which consists in a compromise of all fixed principles of faith, as savouring of bigotry and intolerance; which encourages alike the most conflicting opinions, treats with contempt the authority of the Catholic Church of Christ, and insults the dignity, whilst it destroys in effect the stability, of truth. A spirit it is, which, if carried out to its full length, must end, as *regards society*, in universal scepticism, in a negation of all truth as a matter of public importance, in a subversion of all spiritual authority, a dismemberment of the Church, yea and an utter disunion of society itself. This is the spirit, the widely-wasting spirit of religious desolation, to which the maxims of antiquity and the institutions of ages, to which creeds and churches, are now expected to give way:—the spirit, at whose domineering call, or contemptuous *sneer*, you may be tempted, brethren, to sacrifice even your salvation, by denying the Lord from heaven “that bought you” with his blood. There are, indeed, other dangers besides this. There is, for instance, a love of this world, its pleasures, wealth, ease, or honour, which leads many to forget the world to come, and so to despise the Gospel; there is a wilful, or at least a willing ignorance of the truth, which keeps multitudes fast bound in fatal error; there is a thoughtless neglect of it, which causes men gradually to lose their faith, and with that their souls: but *the peculiar temptation of the times* is to be found in the deference exacted, and, from fear of singularity, of sarcasm, or of ridicule, too readily paid, to the spirit of scepticism, already noticed; a deference, which goes to destroy the very landmarks of truth, and to make the most dangerous delusions as reputable in society, as the most sacred

articles of faith; which would put out, in short, the light of the Church of Christ, and, instead, give to each individual a dark lantern of his own, available only to his private use, to be cautiously closed against his neighbour, or opened only to bewilder. Against this sophistical, this paralyzing, this withering "philosophy" (falsely so called), we cannot be too much upon our guard, remembering the Apostle's injunction, not to "cast away our confidence," our openly avowed confidence in the truth, "which hath great recompence of reward," that we be not among them who draw back unto perdition, but of "the just who live by faith."

LECTURE XIV.

Heb. xiii. 22—25.

NOTES.

(P. 243.) “*Openly avowed*” confidence.]—παρρησίαν, x. 35.

(P. 254.) *According to the duties which we have to perform.*]—

“ ’Tis thus in heaven true love is seen,
Where every grace is fitliest shown;
All in their orbits move serene,
Each zealous only in his own;
No zeal eccentric there disturbs
The course of things so wise and fair;
True love its glowing ardour curbs
To its own work, and spends it there.”

Rickards’ Hymns for Private Devotion, p. 106.

(P. 258.) *Suffragan.*]—Timothy is supposed to have been already Bishop of Ephesus, though employed also by St. Paul in ministering generally to him in his Apostolic labours.

(P. 260.) *Or rather “sent away.”*]—ἀπολελυμένον, ver. 23. So Macknight.—Comp. (in the Greek) *Matt.* xiv. 15, 22, 23.—*xv.* 32, 39. *Acts* xix. 40.

Various *admonitions* to different virtues and against judaism.—Their prayers requested.—*Benediction.* (xiii. 1–21.) *Lect. XIII.*
Concluding Salutations, &c. (xiii. 22–25.) *Lect. XIV.*

II.

Outline of the Epistle, in words of the Epistle.

God (i. 1.)—hath in these last days spoken—by *his Son*—[the] heir of all things, by whom—he made the worlds (2.)—the brightness of his glory, the express Image of his Person, and upholding all things—on the right-hand of the Majesty on high (3.)—better than the angels (4.)—[as being] the First—begotten—[an object of] worship (6.)—God (8.)—Lord (10.)—How—escape, if we neglect so great salvation? (ii. 3.)—Lect. I.

The *Son of Man* (ii. 6.)—all things put under him (8.)—The Captain of [our] salvation perfect through sufferings (10.)—Partaker of flesh and blood—that he might destroy him that had the power of death (14.)—in all things—made like unto his brethren—that he might be a merciful High-Priest (17.)—Lect. II.

The *Apostle*—of our profession, Christ Jesus (iii. 1.)—faithful—as Moses was (2.)—Moses—faithful—as a servant (5.)—Christ as Son;—whose house are we, if we hold fast—the hope—unto the end (6.)—Lect. III.

Every *high-priest*—ordained for men in things pertaining to God (ver. 1.)—[one] who can have compassion (2.)—called of God (4.):—So also Christ glorified not himself (5.)—suffered (8.)—became the Author of eternal salvation (9.)—Lect. IV.

Leaving—principles [beginnings]—let us go on unto perfection (vi. 1.)—to the full assurance of hope unto the end (11.)—Lect. V.

Melchisedec—who blessed [Abraham] (vii. 1.)—king of righteousness—king of peace (2.)—without descent—made like unto the Son of God—a priest continually (3.)—How great this man (4.)—Abraham (6.)—less (7.)—and—Levi (9.)—Need that another Priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec (11.)—The priesthood being changed, there is—a change also of the

Law (12.)—[A Priest] pertaining to another tribe (13.)—after [a different] order (17.)—not without an oath (20.)—Surety of a better testament (22.)—[with] a priesthood that passeth not to another [*See marg. trans.*] (24.)—able to save to the uttermost (25.)—Lect. VI.

Sum of the things spoken :—A High-Priest in the heavens (viii. 1.) :—Minister of the true Tabernacle (2.)—Mediator of a better covenant (6.)—This is the covenant, saith the Lord—“ I will put my laws—in their hearts” (10.) :—“ For I will be merciful to their—sins” (12.) Lect. VII.

The first covenant had—a sanctuary (ix. 1.)—not without blood (7.)—a figure for the time (9.)—[of] a greater and more perfect (11.)—holy place (12.)—[and of] the blood of Christ (14.)—the Mediator of the New Testament (15.)—Lect. VIII.

The Law having [only] a shadow of good things to come—can never—make perfect (x. 1.)—Having—boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (19.)—let us draw near with a true heart in—faith (22.)—let us hold fast the profession of our faith (23.)—not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together (25.)—no more sacrifice for sins (26.)—Call to remembrance the former days (32.)—cast not away your confidence (35.)—Lect. IX.

Faith (xi. 1.) :—By it the elders obtained a good report (2.)—Abel (4.)—Enoch (5.)—Noah (7.)—Abraham (8.)—Sarah (11.)—These all—strangers—upon earth (13.)—desire a better country (16.)—Lect. X.

Faith [further exemplified in] Abraham (17.)—Isaac (20.)—Jacob (21.)—Joseph (22.)—Moses’—parents (23.)—Moses (24.)—the Passover (28.)—[the] passing through the Red Sea (29.)—the walls of Jericho falling down (30.)—Rahab (31.)—Gideon and Barak (32.)—and others (36.)—Let us—run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus (xii. 1, 2.)—Lect. XI.

Despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint (xii. 5.)—Refuse not Him that speaketh—from heaven (25.)—Lect. XII.

Brotherly love (xiii. 1.)—[Treatment of] strangers (2.)—them which are in bonds—and which suffer adversity (3.)—Marriage (4.)—Covetousness (5.)—Remember the guides [*see*

marg. trans.] over you (7.)—Jesus Christ the same—ever (8.)
—We have an altar (10.)—without the camp (13.)—[and
sacrifices (16.)—Obey them that—rule (17.)—Pray for us (18.)
—God—make you perfect (21.)—Lect. XIII.

Word of exhortation (22.)—Timothy.—Shortly—I will see
you (23.)—Salutations (24.)—Grace (25.)—Lect. XIV.

THE END.

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V.

